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MESEHOWE:

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE RUNIC LITERATURE OF SCANDINAVIA.

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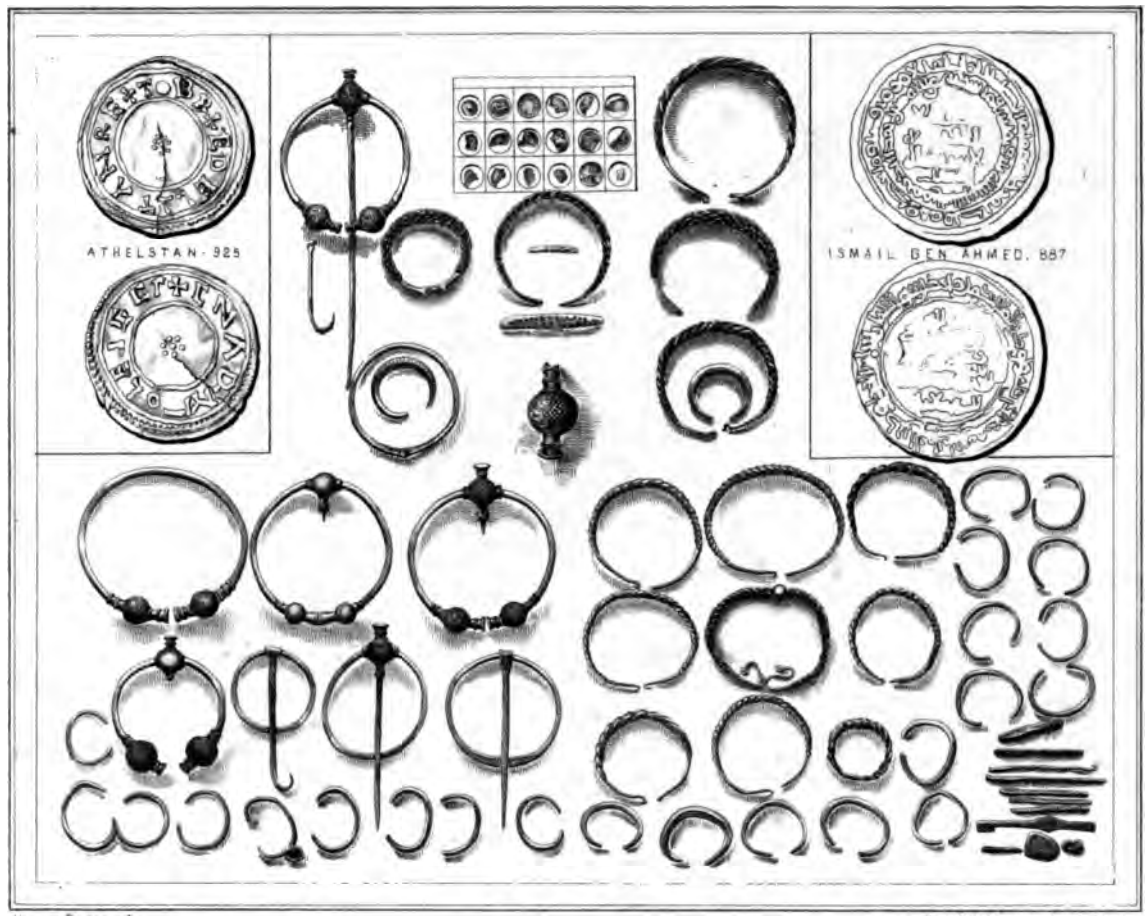

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SILVER ORNAMENTS FOUND IN ORKNEY.

SCALE TO THE ORNAMENTS

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MESEHOWE:

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE RUNIC LITERATURE OF SCANDINAVIA,

TRANSLATIONS IN DANISH AND ENGLISH OF THE INSCRIPTIONS IN MESEHOWE,

VISITS OF THE NORTHERN SOVEREIGNS TO ORKNEY,

NOTES, VOCABULARY, ETC.

BY

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PREFACE.

We owe the discovery of the interesting Runic inscriptions in the mound called Mesehowe, to the great zeal for archæological science evinced by James Farrer, Esq., M.P., who (by permission of Mr Balfour of Balfour and Trenaby, the proprietor of the estate in which it is situated), personally directed such excavations as were necessary to obtain access to the interior; and in the week beginning on Monday, 8th July 1861, the centre was so far cleared out, in presence of Joseph Robertson, Esq., one of the vice-presidents, and John Stuart, Esq., one of the secretaries of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, and other gentlemen, as to give some idea of the value of the rich and remarkable display of the first Scandinavian Runic inscriptions discovered in Orkney.

Mr Farrer was not satisfied with having merely made the discovery; at considerable trouble, accurate drawings and ground-plans of the mound, were made by Mr Gibb of Aberdeen. The inscriptions were carefully copied by the able archæologist, Mr George Petrie of Kirkwall, a gentleman who deserves great credit for the zeal and perseverance he has displayed in collecting antiquarian materials in that quarter. Casts were also taken of the inscriptions, by Mr Henry

Laing, Elder Street, Edinburgh, who went to Orkney for this purpose, at the request of Mr Farrer.

The inscriptions and casts were compared on the spot, and thereafter lithographs of the inscriptions were collated, with the casts by Mr Stuart, who kindly undertook, and ably performed this laborious task.

To account for the delay in the publication of my translations, it is right that I should state that, on the 28th September, Mr Farrer wrote to me: "The Runes will be compared with the casts in the course of a few days, and I then intend to send a few copies to Denmark and Sweden for interpretation. I shall send one to an English Runic scholar, and will order one to be forwarded to you as representing Scotland; but I must ask you to adhere to your proposal to communicate to me only your translation of the Runes, and refrain from giving any report of them until you have my authority to do so. I am most anxious that the Danish and Norwegian scholars should be placed upon equal terms, and therefore the copies will be sent to all by the same post."

In November following, Mr Farrer was so kind as to send a copy of the inscriptions to me, as the Secretary for Foreign Correspondence of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, attending more particularly to Northern Archæology and Philology, having had opportunities of endeavouring to qualify myself during a residence, as well as several excursions, in Scandinavia. The high opinion I then formed of the kindness, and the social and intellectual superiority, of the inhabitants, induced me to learn to speak the northern languages, which enabled me to visit and copy on the spot many of the Runic monuments and inscriptions, which so far accounts for venturing to give my versions of the translations of the most

remarkable and interesting collection of Runic inscriptions hitherto discovered.

My translations of the inscriptions I sent to Mr Farrer, in the beginning of January following, and in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for February, by letter, dated 20th January, he says: "I have now received from Professor Stephens of Copenhagen, a very full and elaborate translation of the Runic inscriptions in the ancient buildings of Mesehowe. I have, in addition, a careful translation from Mr Mitchell, the Belgian Consul at Edinburgh," &c.

In the course of a few weeks more, the other translations having reached him, Mr Farrer's splendid work was prepared, and published in the summer of last year, containing an accurate account of Mesehowe by himself, and the translations of the Runes by the three Scandinavian literati.

Although I had obtained full authority from Mr Farrer, I considered it my duty as an office-bearer, not to publish my translations until I had read them before the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, which only could take place in the first open night of our Winter Session. I hope these circumstances will sufficiently account for part of the delay in their publication.

I am now in a position to lay these translations before the public, and I have been requested to let the work be offered for sale, at the lowest possible price, that the attention of the public may be directed to this branch of Archæology.

I ought here to state, that I have had much friendly intercourse with, and have the greatest possible esteem for, Professor Munch of the University of Christiania, who stands high among Norway's most talented literary men. I have the same esteem and respect for my friend Etatsraad Rafn,

the talented secretary of the Royal Northern Society of Antiquaries of Denmark, who has added so much to the science in its publications. With Mr Stephens I have not the pleasure of being acquainted, but I am fully aware of his high literary acquirements. Had either, or any other, afforded the requisite elucidation of the Runes, I would have been spared considerable labour. If any errors are found in these, they are entirely my own, as I have had no assistance in their interpretation.

I have to express my best thanks to Mr Farrer for his kind permission to make such use of his work as I might deem expedient; to Captain Thomas, R.N., for permission to copy his plan and elevation of Mesehowe; and to Thomas S. Muir, Esq.,* for his ground-plans of it.

The remarkable representations of the Dragon, and the Serpent-knot, were photographed on the spot at Mesehowe, and then copied on stone. The ancient silver ornaments found in Orkney, now in the Society's collection, I first got photographed, and then accurately lithographed, so that their appearance and relative sizes are carefully preserved in the frontispiece of this work.

In such Runic inscriptions, we see that the Scandinavians of the ninth and tenth centuries were men of superior education, as compared with some of the neighbouring countries; and we become, after studying their Eddas, their Sagas, and their other interesting works, impressed with the belief that the Pagan and invading Scandinavian warriors, statesmen, and poets, in their writings, in their moral character, their bravery and success in war, may be placed at least on a level

* Author of an ably written work, "Characteristics of Old Church Architecture in the Mainland and Western Islands of Scotland." Edmonston & Douglas, 1861.

with the Pagan and invading Romans; and with this knowledge, we see no reason why the ancient and modern Northern languages, so replete with brilliant talent and interesting historical records, should not receive more attention than they have hitherto obtained, at least from the inhabitants of the British Islands.

I have endeavoured to make this publication as attractive as possible by giving:

1st, Opposite the lithographic copies of the Runic inscriptions of Mesehowe
„ „ The same, or Runic, words in Roman letters.
„ „ The translation in modern northern or Danish.
„ „ The translation in English.

2d, The description of Mesehowe.

3d, An Account of the Mesehowe Inscriptions.

4th, A short account of the Runic literature of Scandinavia.

5th, As perhaps connected with some of the inscriptions, particularly the Dragon and Serpent-knot.
The visits to Orkney of the following Kings of Norway:
1st, King Harold Harfager;
2d, King Harold Haardraade;
3d, King Magnus Barbein; and
4th, King Haco on his voyage to attack Scotland.

6th, In the Notes:
1st, The Scandinavian mode of warfare at sea in ancient times in the account of the sea-fight of King Olaf Trygvesen of Norway with the Kings of

Denmark and Sweden, and Erik Jarl, a celebrated Viking.

2d, An account of the treasure discovered in Orkney, which is supposed to be referred to in, at least, one of the inscriptions.

3d, Elucidations of some of the names, &c., supposed to be referred to.

And 7thly, A Glossary of the difficult or doubtful words.

ON THE

RUNIC LITERATURE OF SCANDINAVIA.

THE RUNIC ALPHABET.

F UDTHO R K H N I A S T B L M Y *or* R

That we may duly appreciate the importance of the discovery of the Runic inscriptions in Mesehowe, it may be worth while to take a cursory view of the Runic Literature of Scandinavia. The most prominent evidence of the use of the Runes in ancient times, exists in the inscriptions on the stone monuments erected in the three kingdoms of Scandinavia. The greatest number has been found in Sweden—namely, about 1400; and there are about 400 in Denmark and Norway: a few in Greenland, two in England, none in the mainland of Scotland (unless the Swedish one in the West Princes Street Gardens, Edinburgh, may be considered such), some in the Isle of Man, one at Holy Island off Arran, two only of indistinct character in Shetland, and these in Mesehowe, Orkney.

Not many of the continental ones have either peculiar or local interest, and they are generally very short, affording little information. Still, from some of the inscriptions, interesting deductions may be made as to the habits and characteristics, of the inhabitants in ancient times.

A number of these monuments state, that the individuals named had proceeded on predatory expeditions to England. For instance, one near Stavanger, Norway, says, Bjorn fell in an expedition when Canute reigned in England, namely:

ᚴᚨᚦ· ᚨᚱᚴᛁᛋᛏᛁᚾ· ᚱᛁᛋᛏᛁᚾ· ᚦᛁᚾᛅ· ᛁᚠᛏᛁᚱ· ᛒᛁᚮᚱ· ᛁᚾ· ᛋᚢᚾ· ᛋᛁᚾ· ᛋᚨ· ᚡᚨᚱ· ᛏᚢᚦᛁᚱ· ᛁᛚᛁᛋ· ᚴᚾᚢᛏᚱ· ᛋᚢᛏᛁ· ᛁᚴᛚᛅᛏ·

"Koth Arkstin ristin thina iftir Bior sun sin sa var tuthir ilis Knutr soti Iklat."

"Koth Arkstin cut these, in memory of Biorn his son, who was killed in battle when Knut (Canute) reigned in England."

Those who went usually in regular expeditions were called farar, such as "Iklotes farar," and I was shewn a stone in the ancient church of Old Upsala, with the following inscription:

ᛁᚢᚴᚾᛁᚦᚱ· ᛁᛁ· ᛋᛏᛅᛁᚾ· ᚦᛁᚾᛅ· ᛁᚴᛚᛅᛏᛋ· ᚠᚨᚱᛁ ᛅᚠᛏᛁᚱ ᚡᛁᛏᚨᚱᚠ ᚠᚨᚦᚢᚱ ᛋᛁᚾ·

"Sigwithr stain thina Iklats fari aftir Witarf fathur sin."

"Sigwith cut this stone in memory of Witarf his father, a leader to England."

England is spelt in such inscriptions variously; such as Iglats, Iklauths, Eglans, Auklans, Aklati, Eglati, Egloti, and Ilati.

Some of the stones also bear that the individuals named were leaders to [or fought or died in] Greece, Krikifari; to Asia, Asfari; to Jerusalem, Jorsolafari; to Lombardy, Longbartlantfarar, &c. "Westerferd" and "Westenhap" also occur, and these expressions apply to the voyage, embracing Orkney, the Hebrides, and Ireland, and therefore specially to the locality we have before us.

One of the two Scandinavian Runic inscriptions referred to, as found in England, was discovered in 1855 on the west wall

of the southern transept of Carlisle Cathedral, about the time when the restoration of this Cathedral had commenced. The words are:

ᛏᚮᛚᚠᛁᚾᚾ· ᚼᚱᛅᛁᛏᛅ· ᚫᛏ· ᚢᛚᚠᚼᚾᚱ· ᛅ· ᚦᛁᛋᛁ· ᛋᛏᛅᛁᚾ·

"Tolfinn Hraita at Ulfhnr, a thisi stain."

"Dolfinn inscribed this stone in memory of Ulphnr."

In a very able paper on this discovery, by the Rev Mr Maughan of Bewcastle (who has exhibited much talent and research in deciphering the Anglo-Saxon Runes on the celebrated Bewcastle Monument), he shews the probability that this inscription on Carlisle Cathedral wall, was made about the year 1062, by Dolfin, son of Cospatrick, Earl of Northumberland, who, when Governor of Carlisle, and owner of part of the adjacent country, was driven out by King William. And Mr Maughan, in confirmation of this, proves that Dolfin had a son named Ulphnr, or Ulphius, who was treacherously murdered by Tosty, the other, or pretended, Earl of Northumberland.

The other Runic inscription found in England, was dug up in St Paul's Churchyard, London, in 1852, and has the following words:

ᚴᛅᚾ· ᛚᛁ· ᛚᛁᚴᛁ ᛋᛏᛁᚾ· ᚦᛁᚾᛋᛁ· ᛅᚢᚴ· ᛏᚢᚴᛁ·

"Kona let legia stin thensi auk Tuki."

Councillor of State Rafn makes the translation:

"Conal and Tuke laid this stone."

But perhaps the following is the most accurate:

"His wife laid this stone to Tuke."

There have been only two indistinct fragments of Scandinavian Runic inscriptions discovered in Shetland, which are mentioned in Hibbert's Shetland, 531, 547.

In noticing the remarkable inscription in the Firth of Clyde, it may be observed that, when King Haco came to the Scottish coast to endeavour to retake the Scottish islands, he is said to have anchored at Melanseyer, Molan's Isle Bay, or Holy Island Roads, on his return, where he lay some nights; and we find in the cave on Holy Island, off Lamlash, Arran, the following inscription:

ᚾᛁᚴᚢᛚᛁ᛫ ᛏᚼᛅᛁᚾᛁ ᚱᛅᛁᛋᛏ

"Niculas thaene raest."
"Nicolas cut these."

We have every reason to suppose that this inscription was cut by one of King Haco's commanders, named Nicolas of Giska, who was in the expedition. The Runes are evidently stung Runes, and of the date of Haco's expedition. There are other inscriptions in the same cave; but none of them so distinct as to be pronounced Scandinavian. We are indebted to Professor Daniel Wilson, in his interesting and valuable work on the *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland,* for bringing this before the public—*vide* page 531.

There are several well-cut Scandinavian Runic inscriptions on monuments in the form of crosses in one of our Scottish islands, Man, which are comparatively of little interest, and, from the characters, may be pronounced to belong to the twelfth century. Copies of several of the monuments and inscriptions may be seen in Dr Daniel Wilson's able work, already referred to, page 537.

One of these monuments, of which there is a perfect copy in the Museum of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, has

the following inscription. We give it as a fair example of the others, which are generally sepulchral.

ᚦᚢᚱᛚᛁᚢᚱ· ᚾᛅᚴᛁ· ᚱᛁᛋᛏᛁ · ᚴᚱᚢᛋ· ᚦᛅᚾᛅ· ᛅᚠᛏ· ᚠᛁᛅᚴ· ᛋᚢᚾ·
ᛁᚾ· ᛒᚱᚢᚦᚢᚱ· ᛋᚢᚾ· ᛅᛁᚱᛋ·

"Thurlior Neaki risti krus thana aft Fiak sun sin bruthur sun Eaors."
"Thurlior Neake cut this cross over Fiak his son, brother's son of Eaor."

We shall add the inscription on a Scandinavian Runic monument which can be seen in Edinburgh, and may be considered a very good representation of the greater number of Runic monuments in Sweden. It was brought from Sweden by Sir Alexander Setoun of Preston in 1787. It is of granite, five feet in height, by three and a half feet in breadth, and is situated on the south side of West Princes Street Gardens.

ᛅᚱᛁ· ᚱᛁᛋᛏᛁ· ᛋᛏᛅᛁᚾ· ᛅᚠᛏᛁᚱ· ᚼᛁᛅᛚᛘ· ᚠᛅᚦᚢᚱ· ᛋᛁᚾ· ᚴᚢᚦ· ᚼᛁᛅᛚᛒᛁ· ᛅᚴ· ᛋᛁᚾ·

"Ari risti stain aftir Hialm fathur sin Guth hialbi and sin."
"Ary cut (this) stone over Hialm his father, God help his spirit."

It is to be regretted that the hammer has been recently applied to this very superior specimen of a Scandinavian Runic monument, and two letters are knocked off, so that it ought to be removed without delay to a place of safety.

Scandinavian Runic inscriptions also occur on houses, on churches, on church-bells, on fonts, on drinking-horns, and on wooden calendars of various ages. Among the most remarkable inscriptions in Runes, other than on the stone monuments, may be mentioned the Scandinavian Runic inscription on the statue of the Lion, which had been taken by the Venetians from Athens in 1687, and the meaning of which has been so fully explained by the talented Secretary of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Denmark, C. C. Rafn, Esquire. Some of the

Runic letters in the inscription on the Lion, are much worn out, and therefore have to be supplied, and cannot well be described without suitably formed types. The English of the inscriptions can only therefore be given here. On the left side, on a scroll, are apparently the words:

"Hakon, along with Ulf, Asmund, and Orn, took this port. These men, with Harald the Tall, imposed heavy contributions on the inhabitants of the country on account of the resistance of the Greeks. Dalk remained from necessity in distant lands. Egil was with Ragnar on an expedition to Ru(menia) and Armenia."

And on the right side, on a different-formed scroll:

"Asmund cut these Runes along with Asgeir, Thorleif, Thord, and Ivar, at the request of Harald the Tall, although the Greeks opposed (or obliterated) . . ."

The monuments in Jutland to King Gorm and Queen Thyra, are considered in Denmark to be very interesting. King Gorm died in 941, and therefore these inscriptions must be among the oldest in that country. The words on Queen Thyra's monument are translated:

"Gorm the King, erected this monument to his Queen, Thyra, Denmark's Love."

And on King Gorm's monument:

"Harold the King ordered these monuments to be raised to Gorm his father, and to Thyra his mother. Harald also subdued all Denmark and Norway, and Christianised the Danish people."

The King Harold mentioned in the preceding, was King Harald Blaatand, and both monuments are much valued as historical records.

The inscriptions explanatory of the carvings on eleven compartments of the ancient baptismal-font, in the Church of Okirkeby, in the Island of Bornholm, described in the

Antiquariske Annaler, vol. 4, page 140, also possess considerable interest.

We have reason to suppose that before the use of paper in Scandinavia, Runes would be used in shortly recording the events in ancient times, as also the laws that were then enacted, on wood ; such as thin plates of beech (from whence the word book is supposed to be derived), or plates or blocks of ash or birch. We have no knowledge from any existing remains of such, that the Scandinavian Runes were so used ; but several very interesting and well-cut Rune-staves or calendars are in existence ; the oldest of which is of the fourteenth century.*

The number of works in written Runes discovered on paper or parchment is inconsiderable, and the subjects not of unusual or extraordinary kind. One on six sheets of parchment of 12mo size, a fragment without beginning or end, which was found in Wallentuna Church, Sweden, is now in the Royal Museum of Antiquaries, Stockholm, the age not known ; and in the University Library of Copenhagen, there is a manuscript in Runes on parchment, in 8vo, with a short account of the Danish kings to the year 1319, and also a statement as to the boundaries between Denmark and Sweden.

These, with one or two almanacs of a comparatively late date, the oldest of which is of the year 1328 (published in the *Fastes Danici* of Olaus Wormius), are all the Scandinavian Runic manuscripts of any value known.

What we have here stated will satisfy our readers that the inscriptions lately discovered in Mesehowe are of surpassing

* Saxo Grammaticus says, "Lignum celebre quondam chartarum genus."—Lib. i., p. 60.

interest and importance, and combine in one spot a greater number of interesting Scandinavian Runic inscriptions than have yet been discovered in Northern Europe.

There are several modifications of the form of the Scandinavian Runes which do not require to be noticed here, and which can only be interesting to the advanced scholar in Runic literature; but we may here state that the Anglo-Saxon and Ogham Runes are quite distinct in character and number from the Scandinavian Runes, and do not come within the scope of these, necessarily limited, remarks.

ON THE MESEHOWE INSCRIPTIONS.

It is a fortunate circumstance that the Mesehowe has been so long covered up, because the nature of the rock, of the Old Red Sandstone, upon which the inscriptions are cut, is such that if they had been exposed for half a century to the atmosphere, they would have been obliterated. Already one of the inscriptions has become illegible from the friability of the stone; and it will be advisable that the proprietor, who, we know, is anxious to preserve them, puts on an air-tight roof; if of wood, it might be opened to the visitor in dry or favourable weather, but it should not be opened in moist, damp, or frosty weather.

The greatest peculiarity of the Mesehowe inscriptions, as compared with the previously known inscriptions, is the fulness of the statements, and the amplitude of the facts. One or two prove that the crews of such predatory ships referred to, had been either wrecked, or driven on shore by the enemy, and were waiting until an opportunity occurred to escape; that

the jarls or heads of local authority at the time, were opposed to the freebooter's plundering excursions, and that the circumstance of the vikings concealing themselves in such places of security as Mesehowe, speaks favourably as to the system of government there.

In comparing these inscriptions with all those of a similar age in the three kingdoms of Scandinavia, we find a great similarity in the type, and not a great difference in the language; so that the deduction we are fully entitled to make is, that ONLY ONE LANGUAGE WAS USED IN SCANDINAVIA ABOUT NINE CENTURIES SINCE, with only small differences between each country, easily seen and understood in that age.

But while the prominent portions of these inscriptions are decidedly Norrœnic, Icelandic, or what may be truly called Old Danish, there is running through the larger inscriptions a strange, and almost amusing, peculiarity, which might induce us to suppose that the freebooters had a sort of *lingua franca* of their own, so sufficiently puzzling to the Scandinavian scholars *of the present time*, as to make Jamieson's Scottish Dictionary, and an ordinary Swedish dictionary, nearly as necessary as Rask's Icelandic in endeavouring to obtain the meaning of such larger inscriptions. A learned and admirably prepared dictionary, *Egillson's Poetic Icelandic*, lately published at Copenhagen,* I found of great value in leading me to the meaning of several words.

In the admirably written work of one of our former secretaries, Dr Daniel Wilson, the *Archæology and Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*, before referred to, and which will ever remain a valuable standard work in Scotland, Dr Wilson says with prophetic acuteness, "in Orkney no Runic monu-

* S. Egillson Lexicon Poeticum Antiquæ Linguæ Septentrionalis.

ment is known to exist, though it cannot be doubted that many such must have been erected during the earlier years of the independent occupation of the northern islands by the Norwegian jarls. Some of these, it is not impossible, may yet be brought to light." But I here refer to Dr Wilson's work principally to shew the amusing errors that were committed as to the translation of the Anglo-Saxon Runic inscriptions on the celebrated monument in the parish of Ruthwell, Scotland. It will be seen that the talented Icelandic scholar, Mr Repp, one who, in his time, stood above all his northern countrymen as a Runic scholar, and Mr Finn Magnussen, also a Runic scholar, made serious blunders in translating the Runes on the Scottish monument, the true translation of which was discovered by Mr J. M. Kemble, the eminent Anglo-Saxon scholar. Dr Wilson says:

"But one other remarkable Runic monument remains to be considered, surpassing in extent and importance any of those yet described, and rendered not the less interesting from the very curious literary controversy to which it has given rise. This is the celebrated cross of Ruthwell, in Dumfriesshire, inscribed not in Northern but Anglo-Saxon Runes. Like the few English examples yet discovered, it is in the Northumbrian dialect of Anglo-Saxon, and therefore is traceable, not to that northern intrusion of the Scandinavian branch of the Teutonic races which we have hitherto considered, and by which the old Celtic race of Scotland has been so greatly modified, but to the influx of a Teutonic race from the south, by which the Celtic occupants of the Scottish Lowlands and the whole Northumbrian kingdom, were ultimately superseded. Nevertheless the cross of Ruthwell may be referred to here without any great risk of confusion, along with those inscribed

in the old Norse dialect; notwithstanding the justice of Mr J. M. Kemble's remarks, that 'the characters of the Norwegians, Swedes, Danes, and Icelanders, are not less distinct from those of the Goths, High and Low Germans, and Anglo-Saxons, than the languages of the several nations which they represented.'* The Ruthwell cross is unquestionably by far the most important Runic monument in Britain, and has excited an attention fully equal to the great interest justly pertaining to it. A beautiful engraving of this ancient monument in the fourth volume of the Archæologia Scotica, accompanied with careful fac-similes of its inscriptions, renders any minute description of it superfluous.

"Setting aside certain old and sufficiently vague local traditions recorded in the first Statistical Account of the Parish of Ruthwell, we obtain the earliest authentic notice of it only in the seventeenth century, at which time it appears to have still remained in the parish church, uninjured by any of those earlier ebullitions of misdirected popular zeal to which so many Scottish relics of Christian art fell a prey. When, however, the struggle between Charles I. and his people was rapidly hastening to a crisis, and religious differences were forced by many concurrent influences into violent collision, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, which met at St Andrews in the month of July 1642, passed an order decreeing the demolition of the Ruthwell cross as a monument of idolatry. The order met with a less hearty and thorough-going execution than might have been anticipated from the spirit prevailing at a period when the whole course of public events had tended to inflame men's minds to the

* Archæologia, vol. xxviii. p. 327.

uttermost. The column, however, was thrown down and broken in several pieces; but it still lay in the church, and was examined there by Pennant so recently as 1772. Soon after this, however, it was cast out into the churchyard, where its exposure to weather, and its liability to careless and wanton mutilation, threatened at length most effectually to accomplish the object of the St Andrews Assembly's Order of 1642, when fortunately the Rev. Dr Duncan was presented to the parish. Soon afterwards he had the fragments of the venerable memorial pieced together, and re-erected within the friendly shelter of the manse garden—a monument to his own good taste, with which his name will be associated by thousands who know not the large-hearted benevolence and piety with which he adorned the sacred office which he filled.

"Not content, however, with merely restoring the venerable memorial, Dr Duncan executed careful drawings of it, from which the engravings in the fourth volume of the Archæologia Scotica were made. These are accompanied with a history from his pen, and an accurate translation of the Latin inscription, which is cut in Roman characters on the back and front of the cross. With the Runic inscription, which occupies the remaining sides of the monument, Dr Duncan attempted no more than to furnish the Scottish antiquaries with an accurate copy, leaving those who deemed themselves able for the task to encounter its difficulties, and render an intelligible version of its meaning. This was accordingly undertaken by Mr Thorleif G. Repp, a learned northern scholar, a native of Iceland, then resident in Edinburgh, who, reading the letters correctly enough, proceeded to weave them into imaginary words and sentences, by means of which he makes out the inscription to record 'a gift for the expiation of an injury, of

a *cristpason* or baptismal-fount, of eleven pounds' weight, made by the authority of the Therfusian fathers, for the devastation of the fields.' Other portions of the inscription were made to supply the name of the devastated locality, 'The dale of Ashlafr,' a place as little heard of before as were its holy conservators, the Monks of Therfuse! Dr Duncan remarks, in furnishing an abstract of Mr Repp's rendering of the Ruthwell Runes: 'It is obvious that, in future inquiries on this subject, it will be of considerable importance to fix the locality of *Ashlafardhal* and *Therfuse!*' The accurate drawings of Dr Duncan, however, published as they were to the learned world by the Scottish Antiquaries, had at length supplied the most important desiderata towards the elucidation of the old Anglo-Saxon memorial. Professor Finn Magnussen was the first to avail himself of the new elements for the satisfactory investigation of this venerable Teutonic relic, and published, in Danish, in the 'Annaler for Nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie, 1836-37,' and nearly at the same time in English, in the 'Report addressed by the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries to its British and American Members,' a revised version of the Ruthwell inscription, in which, while confirming the somewhat startling opinion of Mr Repp, that it was in a language consisting both of Anglo-Saxon and old Northern words, he arrives at very different, but still more precise conclusions. The learned Dane, however, had obtained, as he conceived, a source of information which not even the zealous incumbent of Ruthwell parish had access to:

'Fortunately,' says he, 'we are in possession of what must be admitted to be an important document in the case before us, a document the existence of which was unknown as well to Mr Repp as, to the best of our belief, to all others now living, that have devoted attention to the monument in question. Dr Duncan observes that

the capital of the column, which in the delineations he gives of it shews no characters or traces of such, had, however, formerly inscriptions, now quite illegible. The greater part of them, meanwhile, are found on a delineation of the two broader sides of the said capital, which together with the two Runic sides of the whole column (consequently more of it than has been given by Hickes or Gordon), is to be seen on a large folio copperplate engraving, now the property of me, Finn Magnussen. It was given to me some years ago by my much-lamented friend and predecessor, Professor Thorkelin, who, however, his memory being impaired by age, could not remember nything more about it than that it represented a column in Scotland, and that he had obtained it, he knew not how or of whom, during his travels in Britain.'*

"This rare, and indeed seemingly unique print, Professor Magnussen accordingly designates the 'Thorkelin Engraving.' Its age he conceives must be about 150 years, or perhaps still older. 'Be this as it may,' he adds, 'it serves to throw a new and most important light—in fact, the most important yet obtained—on the design and purpose of the column, inasmuch as it has preserved the initial words of its inscription, setting forth that one *Ofa*, a descendant of Voda, had caused it to be cut,' &c. Accordingly, setting aside the humbler attempts of Mr Repp, the Danish professor substitutes a *marriage* for the *devastation* of his predecessor, discovers four important historical personages in the record, nearly fixes the precise year A.D. 650 for the handfasting, and altogether furnishes an entirely new chapter of Anglo-Saxon history, based almost entirely on this Thorkelin print! Some able northern scholars, more familiar with Anglo-Saxon literature than Professor Magnussen, adopted the very summary process of dealing with the new element thus unexpectedly brought to bear on the inquiry, by doubting the authenticity, if not even the existence, of this unique print. Of its existence,

* Report of R. S. of Northern Antiquaries to Brit. and Amer. Mems., 1836, pp. 88, 89.

however, there can be no doubt, since, instead of being the rarity which Professor Magnussen imagined, it is to be found in every archæological library in the kingdom, being none other (as I think will no longer be doubted) than one of two etchings, executed by the well-kown Scottish antiquary, Mr Adam de Cardonnel, and forming *Plates* LIV. and LV. of the Vetusta Monumenta, vol. ii., published in 1789. These are accompanied by a description furnished by R. G. (Roger Gale), and to it the following postscript has subsequently been added, which it will be seen supplies the account Professor Magnussen failed to obtain from his aged friend: 'Since this account was read before the Society [of Antiquaries of London], the drawing has been shewn to Mr Professor Thorkelin, who has been investigating all such monuments of his countrymen in this kingdom, but he has not returned any opinion.' These engravings of the Ruthwell inscription appear to have excited little interest, probably on account of their being accompanied by no critical analysis or attempt at translation. They would seem to have escaped the notice of Mr J. M. Kemble, otherwise he would have found there all that the drawings of Dr Duncan supply, with, indeed, some slight additions; for it chances oddly enough that the old Scottish Antiquary has copied the Anglo-Saxon Runes—about which it may reasonably be doubted if he knew anything—a great deal more correctly than the Latin inscription in familiar Roman characters, some of which he has contrived to render totally unintelligible. It was probably a result of this carelessness, that in arranging a broken fragment of the top of the cross, along with the lower stem, he misplaced the parts, wedding the imperfect upper fragments of the Latin, to the remainder of the Anglo-Saxon inscription. The offspring of this misalliance was the

Ofa, Voden's kinsman, of Professor Magnussen, whose double genealogy is given with amusing precision, 'according to the Younger Edda!' The slightest glance at Cardonnel's etchings will shew that the learned Dane, in attempting to decipher this supposed invaluable addition, was only torturing ill-copied Roman characters into convenient Northern or Anglo-Saxon Runes.

"In 1838, Mr John M. Kemble, an English Anglo-Saxon scholar, undertook to unwind this ravelled skein, and in an able paper 'On Anglo-Saxon Runes,'* pointed out the valuelessness of any amount of knowledge of the Scandinavian languages as a means for deciphering Anglo-Saxon inscriptions. Following out his own views he accordingly produced a translation differing, *toto cœlo,* from either of those already referred to, but which commends itself in some degree even to the mere English student, who detects in the old Anglo-Saxon the radicals of his native tongue; as in the original of Mr Repp's *Cristpason*:—KRIST WAES ON RODI—*Christ was on the Rood or Cross.* Combating with the difficulties arising solely from the mutilated and fragmentary state of what Mr Kemble so justly styles 'this noble monument of Anlo-Saxon antiquity,' he demonstrates the rhythmic character of the construction, deducing from this the strongest proof of the accuracy of his reading. Still should the reader, who is thus compelled to consider two learned versions of this inscription as no better than the Antiquary's *Agricola dicavit libens lubens,* hesitate about accepting the third as less open to challenge, his scepticism could not perhaps be greatly blamed. A remarkable chance, however, threw in the way of the

* Archæologia, vol. xxviii., p. 327.

intelligent Anglo-Saxon scholar an altogether indisputable confirmation of the general accuracy of the conclusions he had arrived at. A comparison of the various steps in this process of elucidation furnishes one of the most singular modern contributions to the curiosities of literature. A few years ago, a MS. volume, consisting chiefly of Anglo-Saxon homilies, was discovered at Vercelli, in the Milanese, but which also contained, intermingled with the prose, some Anglo-Saxon religious poems. One of these, entitled a 'Dream of the Holy Rood,' extends to 310 lines, and in this are found the whole of the fragmentary lines previously translated by Mr Kemble, along with the context which fills up the numerous lacunæ of the time-worn inscription on the Ruthwell cross. No confirmation of the accuracy of conclusions previously published could well be more gratifying or satisfactory than this; independently of which the beauty of the Anglo-Saxon poem suffices to convey a singularly vivid idea of the civilisation existing at the period—probably not later than the ninth century—when it was engraved ϱn the venerable Scottish monument which has anew excited the veneration of the modern descendants of its old Anglo-Saxon builders, and, with some portion of its former beauty renewed by the piety of modern hands, is restored to the occupation of its ancient site. Of the high civilisation of this period, however, the student of Anglo-Saxon history can need no new proof when he bears in mind, as Mr Kemble has remarked, 'that before the close of the eighth century Northumberland was more advanced in civilisation than any other portion of Teutonic Europe.'

"'It always seemed probable,' says Mr Kemble in concluding his observations on the old Scottish monument, 'that much

of the inscription was missing, and the comparison instituted above renders this certain. The passages which remain are too fragmentary ever to have constituted a substantive whole, without very considerable additions, which there is no longer room for upon the cross in its present form. Buried perhaps beneath the soil of the churchyard, or worked into the walls of neighbouring habitations, the supplementary fragments may yet be reserved for a late resurrection. Should they ever again meet the eyes of men, they will add little to our knowledge; still we should rejoice to find them once again resuming their old place in the pillar, and helping to reconstruct in its original form the most beautiful as well as the most interesting relic of Teutonic antiquity.'" *

In these inscriptions we find the following array of names: —Thatir, Tholfr Kolbinsson Wimunt, Orkason Thaimr, Skilts Irmsir, Ingebjirg, Thor, Helkes, Thorer, Arthur, Totar Finla, Erekes, Torfinn, Harmunt, Minton, Arnfithr, Nilssen Sarmans, Simon Sigberg, Sigfreth, Lothbrog, Arsynar, Thrunk Wit, Dalk—27 individuals who have been commemorated or referred to.

The greatest number of these names are Scandinavian, others are evidently Teutonic, and some are probably Scottish or British.

The Lithographs of these inscriptions are, as far as possible, fac-similes of "the writings on the wall;" and therefore these may afford an interesting study of the accomplishments of the educated class among the northern people in ancient times. What a marked difference we see in the style of the two inscriptions, No. 5 and No. 9! Wimunt is written with a

* Archæologia, vol. xxx., p. 38.

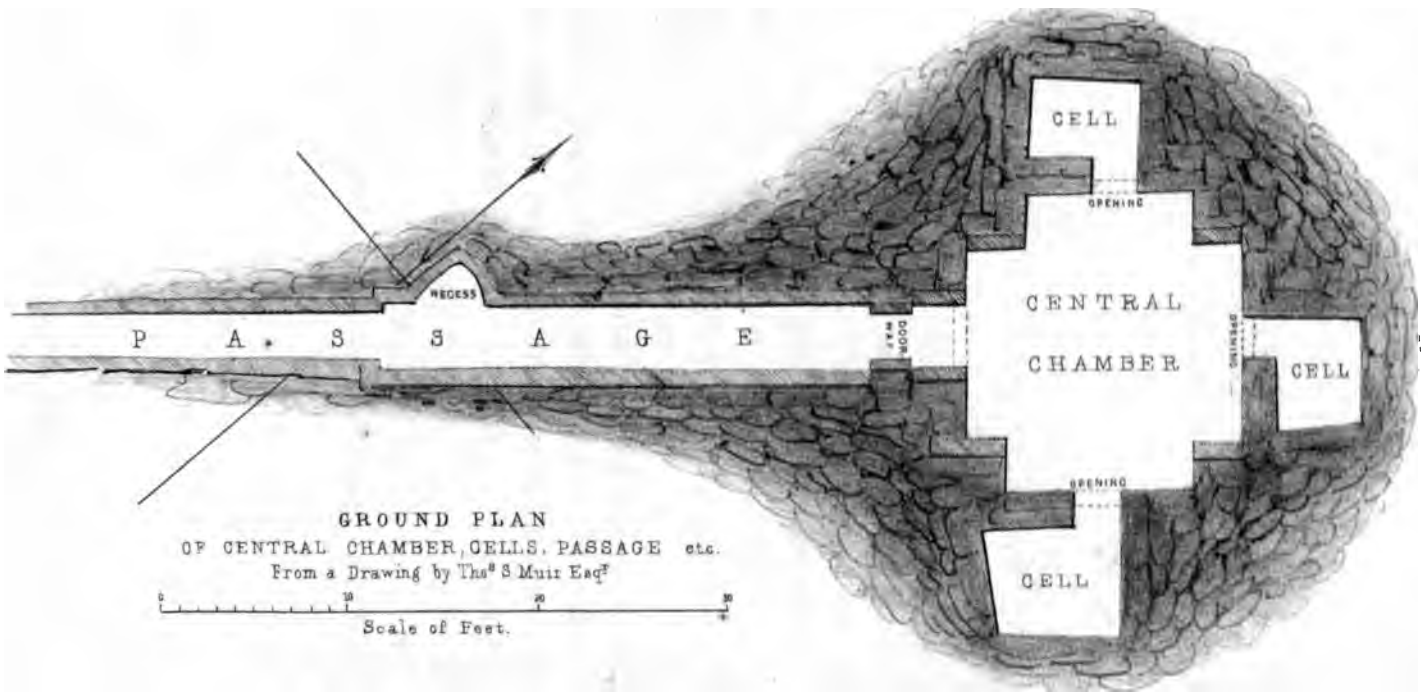
bold, firm hand, and The Old Wizard's, in a tremulous, uncertain manner; and how well cut are the inscriptions, No. 21 and No. 22, and the Dragon, and Serpent-knot.

The mode of writing and spelling—such as not using, but in a single instance, the angular *S*, and the spelling the equivalent to cut, generally with R A E I S T—satisfy us that these inscriptions were made principally by the Norwegian visitors.

When we find that the inscriptions mention the localities where the treasures were lost or concealed, we might be induced to question the propriety of giving such publicity to their positions; but it must be remembered, that it is probable that only one or two of the best educated in each ship could write or read the Runic, and that there was a union of purpose in all such matters among the educated class of the vikings.

It is evident from some of the inscriptions, that when the most of these were written, the vikings were still in a state of darkness as to religion; and it is more than likely, nay, it is self-evident, that the wild habits of robbery and rapine which they pursued, could only be followed by those who were still in a state of heathenism.

GROUND PLAN AND SECTION OF MESEHOWE



W & A K Johnston Lith. Edinr

DESCRIPTION OF MESEHOWE.

It is evident that the hall of Mesehowe, whatever it may have been applied to at a previous period, was specially taken possession of by the freebooters, and prepared as a place of security in their progress to and from the islands, the coast of Scotland, and Ireland.

Several attempts have been made to give the true interpretation of this word Meshow or Mesehowe; "Meshow, or Mesehowe," is so spelt by the minister of the parish of Frith and Stenness, as the name of this now celebrated elevation, in his account of the parish in the *New Statistical Account of Scotland.* It has been said that it is probably derived from the Icelandic word, "Mey," Virgin; and it may have been in the heathen age a place dedicated to the three "Meyer," or prophetesses, mentioned in the Edda, who predicted the fate of man, and afterwards have been used in later times for the performance of the mass, "mess" or "maes" being the ancient term; but perhaps we do not require to search among foreign languages for the interpretation. We find that in the Gaelic

language, the word "measa" means to judge, and "achd" is the Gaelic letters expressive of mound or bank, or hillside—together, "Judgment mound;" but the word perhaps merely means the "Mesthow" or largest of the two elevations. They are situated about 1½ miles from the Stennis Circle, and do not seem to have any connection with it.

Comparing Mesehowe and its interior with the interior of the howe of Quanterness, of which an engraving and an accurate description has been given by Dr Barry in his *History of the Orkney Islands*, and the account given by Dr Daniel Wilson in his interesting work, already referred to, of the *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*, of the howe opened by Mr Petrie on Wideford Hill, and also the howe at Saroock, opened by Captain Thomas, R.N., and described in his able work illustrating his interesting discoveries in Orkney, we find a great similarity in each; there seems to have been no appearance of cremation or sepulture, no urns were found as were found in the cairns in Orkney, and only a skeleton, as if accidental, in the one at Quanterness. And considering that in all of those where the bottoms of the interiors were examined, the bones of animals, such as the horse, cow, sheep, boar, &c., were found in abundance, but generally "not a vestige of human bones," we agree with Dr Daniel Wilson, Dr Barry, and Captain Thomas that these buildings, which, from their massive structure may be styled Cyclopean, were used for the purpose of defence and security, and this opinion will be strengthened if we examine minutely the construction of Mesehowe.

The height of the mound is 36 feet; the height of the inner building, formed of the large or Cyclopean stones, about 16 feet, and this was covered with flat or large ashlar stones, apparently to the height of about 8 feet more, immediately above the

top. This covering of smaller or ashlar stones, increased in thickness down to the base of the building, where the thickness appears to be about 20 feet, forming a strong protection against any attack from without; but the strongest proof that the interior was used for the security of its inhabitants, is the ingenious construction of the entrance; in Mr Farrer's elegant illustrated work on the excavations in Orkney, which has been already referred to,* we are informed that the entrance for the distance of 22½ feet, was only 2 feet 4 inches square, admitting only one person at a time in a crouching manner, the passage then enlarges to 3¼ feet in width, and 4 feet 4 inches in height. At the commencement of this enlarged passage there is a triangular recess in the wall about 2 feet deep and 3½ feet in height and width, and opposite to it is a stone of equal size to the entrance of the enlarged passage which could have been pushed into the opening to prevent access; but this is not all, the enlarged passage of 26 feet in length had been formed by four entire blocks on the roof, sides, and floor; and further on, becomes narrowed by two upright slabs of stone to 2 feet 5 inches, which slabs are 2 feet 4 inches in breadth. Between these slabs, from their form and position, we may suppose that there was another stone door or defence, the distance thence being 2 feet 10 inches to the main chamber. All these seem to prove that the object of the construction was to give the inmates the power to keep out intruders by force, because a few within could have, from the smallness or narrowness of the entrance, kept out any number attempting to force their way from without.

* Notice of Runic Inscriptions discovered during the excavations in the Orkneys, made by James Farrer, M.P. Printed for private circulation, 1862.

We find that this passage was from the
entrance to the doorway at recess, 31 feet in length.
Do. from recess doorway, to
inner doorway, . . 26 „
Inner doorway, to central chamber, . 5 „

Making the entire length of passage, 62 feet.

But great additional protection was obtained by the formidable fosse or ditch which surrounded the mound at the distance of about 112 feet from the outer cells, the width of which ditch is 40 feet, and it must have been of considerable depth, and therefore difficult to pass over, at the time it was formed, even at the present time the depth is from 4 to 8 feet.

In confirmation of the idea that these buildings were intended for defence or protection, Barry in his *History of Orkney*, says in reference to the analogous building at Quanterness, &c., "They stand in full view of the harbours and of the ocean, and are evidently so arranged as to communicate with one another;" and the probability is that they were constructed by the original inhabitants about the eighth or ninth century to protect themselves from the sudden predatory excursions of the northern vikings or freebooters, and that Mesehowe had been seized and altered by the latter for the purpose of sheltering their crews in difficulties.

It is probable that the Orkney and Shetland Islands were in peaceable possession of the original inhabitants, supposed to be Britons or Picts, until about the end of the eighth or beginning of the ninth centuries. The annals of Ulster state the Northmen came first to Ireland in 806, which is said to be about the time when the Hebrides and Ireland were

first attacked by the Northmen, styled vikings, baysmen, or pirates, who landed suddenly on the coasts, attacked and plundered the inhabitants, carried off treasures and articles of value, and taking as many prisoners as they found it convenient to carry in their ships, returned homeward only to come back with perhaps greater strength at a future period.

Such attacks must have tended to make the inhabitants unite to endeavour to protect their homes and their country, and inspired them with that bravery and determination which were necessary to prevent more disastrous inroads.

EXPEDITIONS OF NORTHERN SOVEREIGNS TO ORKNEY.

The inscriptions we find in Mesehowe appear to be principally records by the crews of some of the predatory expeditions, some of whom had been shipwrecked; others engaged in repairing their ships, and some detained with contrary winds; and while to us the expressions Wester ferd, Western expeditions, and West Sea, sound strangely, we must remember that Orkney is to the west of Norway, and the most suitable station for ships from Norway, or northern Scandinavia, to refit or procure provisions, before proceeding to the Hebrides or Ireland, then usual places of destination in the viking expeditions.

But we consider that the beautifully drawn Dragon, and the Serpent-knot, which we find in Mesehowe, are strong proofs of visits having been made to the interior by some of the officers of the royal squadrons that came from Norway, and we therefore give the following curtailed notices of the visits of four Norwegian kings who came to Orkney, namely, Magnus Barfod, Harold Haarfager, Harold Haardraade, and Haco, which we translate from the old Saga or records.

It is but justice to the memory of the ancient sovereigns of the Scandinavian kingdoms, that such pirates were not so engaged by their authority, but often against their express orders, and we have much pleasure in stating this; such predatory excursions having been different from those expeditions of conquest which, although not successful in Scotland, in England, placed Knut the Great on the English throne, raised Rollo to a French dukedom, and William the Norman to a kingdom.

As a proof of what we say of the conduct of some of these Norwegian sovereigns, we give the following from Snorro Sturleson's Heimskringla, to shew that King Harold Haarfager (of the beautiful hair) came, in the year 888, expressly to Shetland, Orkney, and the Hebrides, for the purpose of ridding these islands of the pirates.

EXPEDITION TO THE WEST BY KING HAROLD HAARFAGER.

"King Harold having learned that the Vikings (or pirates) who knew the islands and places in the west sea, and plundered there in summer, had been also plundering in the interior of Norway during winter, he pursued them and drove them all out of the country; and they took to the open seas. The king having determined to get rid of them, in summer sailed with his fleet to the west sea. He first came to Shetland, and killed there all those vikings who could not get away. He then sailed south to the Orkneys, and cleared all these islands of the Vikings, and then proceeded to the Hebrides and attacked and slew many of them there.*

* Harold Konnings spördi at vida um mittlandet heriada Vikingar; their er á vetrum voro fyrir vestan haf; hann hafdi thü leidangr uti hverr sumar; oc kannedi eyar oc utseer. Enn hvar sem Vickingar vrdv varir vid her hans, thä flydo allir oc flestir á

The same author tells us that the Orkney Islands suffered much from the Danish and Norwegian vikings during the time of the jarls of Orkney, Brusius and Thorfinn. The words used by Snorre are, "The Norwegians and Danes in their piratical expeditions plundered much on the west sea, and came often to Orkney in proceeding west and returning east, doing much harm there."

EXPEDITION OF KING HAROLD THE BOLD.

On another memorable occasion, King Harold Haardraade (the stern or bold) of Norway, in the year 1066, proceeded with a large fleet and army on an expedition to England, for the purpose of attacking King Harold Godwinsen of England. On this voyage, he arrived in Orkney, and having refitted, leaving there his queen Elisif, or Elizabeth, and his two daughters, Maria and Ingegerda, he took the two earls of Orkney, Paul and Erland, and their ships and troops with him, in addition to his Norwegian forces—with these additions the ships of war then amounted to two hundred, besides smaller ships and transports, the number being in all upwards of five hundred—and sailed for the coast of England, landed at Cleveland, and defeated a large army sent against him; but he was afterwards defeated and slain at Stamford Bridge, on the 25th September 1066.

haf ut. Enn er Konning leiddiz thetta starf, tha var that ä einn sumar, at Haroldr Konungs sigldi med her sinn Vestr um haf; kom hann fyrst vid Hjaltland oc drap thar alla Vikingr tha er eigi flyda undan. Sidan siglir Haroldr Konungr sudr til Orkneya, oc reinsadi thar allt af Vikingom. Eptir that for hann allt i Sudreyiar, oc herriar thär: hann drap thar marga Vikinga."—From Snorre Sturleson's *Heimskingla.*

EXPEDITION OF MAGNUS BARFOD.

Another remarkable royal visit to Orkney was performed by King Magnus Barfod, or Barbein, who proclaimed in Norway his intention of undertaking a "westerferd," or western expedition; and being joined by his principal warriors, he set sail in sixty large ships. Having arrived at Orkney, he appointed his son, then only eight years of age, Viceroy, who, on account of his youth, was assisted by councillors and administrators. He took the two Earls of Orkney prisoners, and sent them to Norway, and made their sons, Hacon, Erland, and Magnus, join his army; and after proceeding to the Islands of the Hebrides, Man, and Anglesey, and putting them under subjection, he returned in the following spring to Norway. He afterwards proceeded on a second expedition from Norway to Orkney, then to Ireland, where he was slain in an ambush in 1103. Snorro Sturleson thus describes the dress and accoutrements which King Magnus wore when he was slain: "King Magnus had a helmet on his head, and carried a red shield upon which was inlaid a golden lion, and he had girt by his side his sword 'Leggebidor,' which was very sharp, and the hilt was of ivory, ornamented with gold. In his hand he carried a short spear, and he wore a red silk jacket over his under-dress, which, before and behind, had a Lion sewed on it in yellow silk, and every one said that there never was a bolder or finer-looking man." He had reigned ten years over Norway, and was not thirty when he was slain. We are told by Torfœus, vol. 3, book 7, cap. 8, and by Munch in his *History of Norway*, that the origin of the cognomen Barfod, properly Barbein (barelegs), arose from the circumstance that King

Magnus and his courtiers adopted the dress then worn by the Scottish highlanders—a short petticoat or kilt without trousers.

EXPEDITION OF KING HACO.

The last and most remarkable visit made to Orkney by a Norwegian king, was that by King Haco, in 1263, which we translate, and give, much curtailed, from the Flateyan and Frisian MS., in the old northern language. He had previously been applied to by King Alexander II. of Scotland, to make an arrangement to yield up the islands on the Scottish coasts, which King Alexander claimed as belonging to Scotland; and who while insisting on his claim against Angus of Argyle, died in the island of Kerrara, near Mull, 8th July 1249.

Haco resolved to resist any attempt to deprive him of these parts of his dominions, and endeavoured to strengthen his influence in the Scottish islands by giving his daughter to Harold, King of Man, and inviting John, King of the Hebrides, Magnus, Earl of Orkney, and the Abbot of Iona and other individuals of influence in these islands, to visit him in Norway. But King Haco found that the Scottish power was more concentrated and enlarged since the reign of Alexander the First, and that without some great effort he would have to yield up the superiority to the Scottish monarch. Before trying to retake the islands by force, King Alexander the Third sent, in the summer of 1261, two ambassadors to King Haco, whose embassy is thus quaintly mentioned—"In the summer of 1261 there came to Norway two ambassadors from Alexander the

Scottish king, the one an archdeacon, and the other a knight named Missel. They used "more fair words than true," as the king Haco said; and they went so suddenly away that no one knew of it until they were under sail. On this the king sent Briniolf Jonssun after them, who brought them back. The king said that they must stay the winter in Norway for trying to go away without asking leave, which was not like what other ambassadors did."* These ambassadors had no doubt been unsuccessful in their embassy, and were anxious to escape the too kind hospitality of the Norwegian court. They having returned in the spring of 1262, reported the result. King Alexander III. then endeavoured to take the Islands by force, and sent the Earl of Ross, Kvarnac, the son of MacCamhal, who commenced hostilities in Sky.

King Haco having received intelligence of this, was much annoyed, and laid the subject before his council, and orders were issued to get all the troops and provisions which Norway could produce to be ready for shipment in the beginning of the following year. In spring a numerous army and well-appointed fleet (the ship conveying King Haco being built entirely of oak, and having splendid ornaments of gold dragons at the bow and stern, and having twenty-seven banks of oars), sailed from Norway for Orkney, several small squadrons having preceded the main fleet.

With a favouring breeze King Haco arrived at Shetland,

* "Um sumarit komo vestann af Skotlandi, sendimenn Alexanders Skota Konongs, Erkidiakn einn, ok riddari er Missel het. Their foro meirr med fagor yrdom enn trunadi at thvier konongi virdtiz. Their foro sva i brott, at engi vissi fyrr en their höfdi undir segill sitt. Tha sendi konongr Briniolf Jonssun aftir theim, ok hafdi hann tha aftr med ser. Sagdi konongr at theirr skylldo vera i Noregi um vetrinn, fyrer that er their villdo fara orlofslaust, framar, enn, adrir sendimenn."

having been only two nights at sea, and, remaining there a fortnight, sailed to Orkney and arrived at Eladerwig, near Kirkwall. Staying there a few days, he sailed to Ronaldsve, where he was joined by Earl Ronald and the Orkney fleet, and after laying contributions on Caithness, proceeded on the voyage, and passing the Lewis, arrived in Sky Sound, where he was joined by the fleet of Magnus of Man and others, and at Karrara by the fleet of King Dougal, and all their troops from the Hebrides. King Haco having by this time under him one hundred well-appointed war-vessels and their crews, sent fifty of his ships to plunder at the Mull of Kintyre, and five to Bute. At Karrara, John, King of the Hebrides, came to Haco and told him that he had sworn fealty for his lands to the Scottish king, and offered to resign the lands he held under King Haco.

King John was detained for some time by King Haco, but was afterwards dismissed with presents, he promising to King Haco to endeavour to obtain a peace between him and the king of Scotland. This not having been effected, King Haco sent as envoys to the Scottish king, to treat as to peace, Gillibert, bishop of Hamar, Henry, bishop of Orkney, Andreas Nicholson, Andreas Plytt, and Paul Sur; but after much delay no arrangement could be effected, and after several other attempts, during a truce which had been agreed on, King Haco gave notice of its being at an end, and sent sixty ships to plunder on the north side of the Clyde, and detachments to proceed into the interior of the Highlands, to slay the inhabitants and obtain cattle. Much time had been lost, caused by protracted attempts at peace, probably not unwillingly on the part of the Scottish monarch, and stormy weather came on, as the original narrative says :

"Michaelmas, the 29th September, fell on a Saturday, and on Monday following, there came on a heavy storm, with rain and hail, and the watch at the bows called out that a galley was driving down upon the cable of the king's ship. The men sprang up and found that the rigging of the galley had caught the bows of the king's ship, and carried away the figure-head. The galley then drove aft and on board of the king's ship in such a way, that the cable of this vessel caught the anchors of the king's ship, and forced them to give way.

"The king then commanded that the cable of the galley should be cut away, which was done, and the galley drove off, and the king's ship then held, but remained without the tent (or upper covering) until day. In the morning the galley and a ship of war drove ashore on Scotland. The wind increased in violence and the men of the king's ship got out a fifth anchor. The king then went in a boat, and was rowed out to the islands and let mass be sung. The ships drove into the Sound, and by daylight the storm was so strong that some ships cut away the masts and some drove ashore. The king's ship drove also into the Sound, although there were seven anchors out besides the one left by the galley. They then let go the eighth, a heavy anchor, the ship drove still, but afterwards the anchors held fast. Five ships were driven ashore."*

* "Michials messa var a laugairdag. enn manadags nottina eftir kom a stormr mikill med elum og hreggi. Kaulluda their tha er streingvaurd helldo a Konungs Skipi og sogdo at KUGG einn rak framan at festum. Lupo tha menn op enn stauginn a KUGGINOM festi a hofdi Konougskipsins oh tog af nasaruar. Sidan rak KUGGIN aftr-med bordi, til thes er ackerit tok vid ok festi i Streinginom toko tha ackerin at kraka. Konongrinn bad tha hoggve ackerin strengin a KUGGINOM ok sva gerdo

In the morning after, King Haco came ashore with many people, who lightened the galley and brought it out to the fleet. The Scottish army appeared soon after. . . . "The van of the Scottish army consisted of about five hundred cavalry, all the horses wore breastplates, and many there had Spanish horses all covered with armour; the Scotch had also many foot-soldiers in armour. They carried mostly bows and spears."* It is not intended, nor have we space, to give the details of the battle at Largs. But the Norwegian account, which we are quoting from, has detailed statements of various encounters, some successful and others the reverse, but ultimately the Norwegians drew off as the Northern MS. states. Mr Worsaae, in his talented work, *The Danes in England, Scotland, and Ireland,* says, "The Scottish king had in the meantime arrived on the spot with a large army. A fierce battle took place on the plain near Largs, 3d October 1263, in which the Norwegians, who were exhausted by their endeavours to save their ships, and who, on account of the storm, could not avail themselves of their whole force, were overpowered."—*Page* 290. This battle, and the approach of

their, rak hann tha ut a eyina, ok Konongs Skipit heltz, og lago tialldlausir til dags. Enn um morgynin er flæddi flaur KUGGRINN ok rak um a Skottland og langscip einn. Vindrin tok at vaxa ar eins neytto menn tha gruunfæra theira er höfdo, tha var fellt it simr femta ackeri a Konongskipi. Enn Konongriun for i bat og reyri ur til eyiarinnar og let Syngia ser Messo. Enn Skipinn rak inn a sund ok um dagin æsti stormin, sva at sumir hioggo trein ok suma rak. Konongskipit rak og enn a sundit, ok voro fyrer tha siau ackeri med hvi er their hofdo a KUGGINOM. Ok hit atta athal ackeri, ok rak egi hvi sidr; lido sidarr festo ackerin. Nocker fim skip rak in at landi."

So much of the original is given to introduce the word *Kugg* in proof of the meaning of this word as given in several of the translations of the inscriptions.

* "Flateyan and Fris$^{n.}$" MSS.

winter compelled King Haco to return, and after bringing a great part of his fleet, in the stormiest time of the year, a long voyage on the most dangerous coast in Europe, where in many places there was no shelter, he arrived at Orkney. The very circumstance of a king of so much caution and prudence, venturing to return with his ships at such a season, gives the strongest evidence of the superior character of the ships-of-war and their crews. King Haco, on his arrival in Orkney, resided in the bishop's palace, but, worn out with the fatigues and anxiety of such a long voyage, he died there on the 15th December 1263 of the Norwegian year, which commenced at that time on the 25th March.

Magnus Hakonson, the son of Haco, was proclaimed king of Norway, and saw it to be his interest to yield up to the Scottish sovereign, the Hebrides, Man, and all the other Scottish islands, excepting Orkney and Shetland, for the sum of 4000 marks (to be paid in four years), and 100 marks of annual quit-rent: and in the year 1468, the sovereignty of Orkney and Shetland was transferred to Scotland by King Christian, then sovereign of the three Scandinavian kingdoms, in lieu of, or in pledge for, the dowry of the Princess of Denmark engaged by marriage treaty to King James IV.; and these islands may be truly said, in the language of Dr Barry to form "valuable gems in the Scottish crown." For there are no islands in the British Dominions of the same extent more prosperous, more rapid in the progress of improvement, or having inhabitants more industrious, useful, and intelligent.

TRANSLATION OF THE MESEHOWE INSCRIPTIONS.

☞ The 1st is the original Runic inscriptions in our alphabet.
The 2d the translation of it in modern Northern or Danish.
The 3d the English translation.

PLATE II.

No. I.

THATIR VIKINGR A KOM VTIR HIRTIL.

Thater Viking er kommen hertil for at see sig om.

Thatir (the) Viking has come to look out hither.*

No. II.

THOLFR KOLBÆINSSONR RÆEST RUNAR THESAR HAUA.

Tholfr Kolbainsson ridsede dissi Runer (paa) denne Hoi.

Tholfr Kolbainsson cut these Runes (on) this cave.

No. III.

BRAH OH THANA.

Strandet herhed.

Wrecked, and near this.

No. IV.

FUTHORKH NI AST BYNU.

Futhork bestemt til Nord-Ost.

Futhorkh bound to the North-East.*

No V.

WIMUNTR RÆIST.

Wimunt ridsede.

Wimunt cut.*

No. VI.

ORKASONR SAH THIA RUN OM THAIMIR HAN RISTU.

Orkason sahede disse Runer om Thaimer han ridsede.

Orkason sawed these Runes; for Thaimer he cut (them).*

* See Notes.

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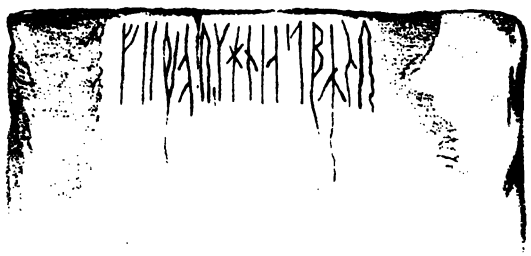

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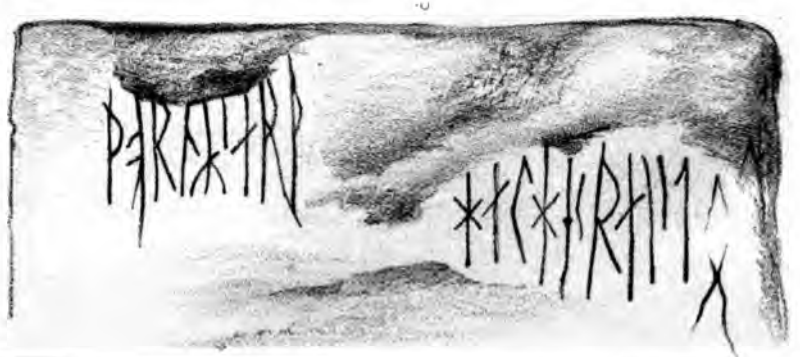


W. & A. K. Johnston Lith. Edin.r

PLATE III.

No. VII.

INGEBIORG HIN FÆGRA AHGIA.
MOERHK KOGA HÆFER FARET LURIN HIR MIHKIL OFLATE.
Ingeborg den smukke i Far,
Seilede i det mörke Kogende Hab,
Luren her i stort Haab.
Ingebiorg the fair in distress.
(After) sailing on the dark raging waves,
(We are) lurking here in great hope.

The six tree Runes form the word *Arrier*, or the time-roll, and represent the year A.D. 1063.*

No. VIII.

NIASR SKILTS IRMSIRS SKURIR FALHN KIABI KSUIL SAH I ANIR SOMAIR.
Udspeider Skilts Irmser har grabet rundt denne Hoi og sat den i rigtig Tilstand.
The explorer, Skilts Irmsir, has cut round this vaulted cave,
and put it in proper order.*

No. IX.

THORER VOMIR.
Thorer Troldmand.
Thorer the Magician.*

No. X.

THOR NYSARTH	HÆLKES RÆISTU T.
Thor smiler	Halkes ridsede T.
Thor favouring*	Halkis cut (these) T.

* See Notes.

PLATE IV.

No. XI.

KNUT RÆIST RUNAR THÆSAR OFR
ALFREH URTHR SONR.

Knud ridsede disse Runer ober Alfred (en)
berdig Son.

Knut cut these Runes over Alfred, (a)
worthy son. *

No. XII.

TOTAR FINLA RÆIST RUNAR THISAR.

Totar Finla ridsede disse Runer.

Totar Finla cut these Runes. *

No. XIII.

O T O N MI RHTTORB TIS TNIRA NOFROT UNAEF TA EH A SEKERE TAS NAM TAHT
.RIÆHTNÆ RTLÆH TRÖF LOUB IF RAV SM

Et billigt Bebiis at Grekes probede at finde Torfin hans Broders Huus (eller Sted) man
meente at N. Ø. til Ø. der bar skjult Skat af stor Verdie bed Indgangen.

A willing record that Erekes tried to discover Torfon his brother's house (or place).
It was thought that N.E. by E. there was hidden treasure of great value at
the entrance-door. *

No. XIV.

NIASER SARMANR LATH GUNHUL RUBA A
MINT NS RO.

Udspeider Sarman har ladet Krigshoie grabe for
Mintns Ro.

The explorer Sarmanr, let the war-cave be
cut for the repose of Mintn.

Or read from right to left—

JORSALA MN A BURTU HAVC THENU.

Jerusalem mænd habe brudt indtil denne Hoi.

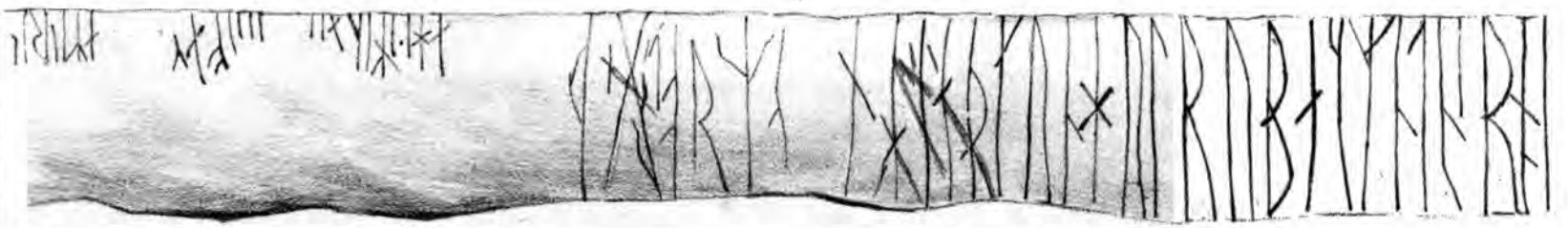
Jerusalem men broke into this hill. *

AHI IMINTNASS IN FAG AMISRIS.

Øjor hinmerksh i Krigh og Mhetb.

Act Heavenly, in Joy, in Evil. *

* See Notes.



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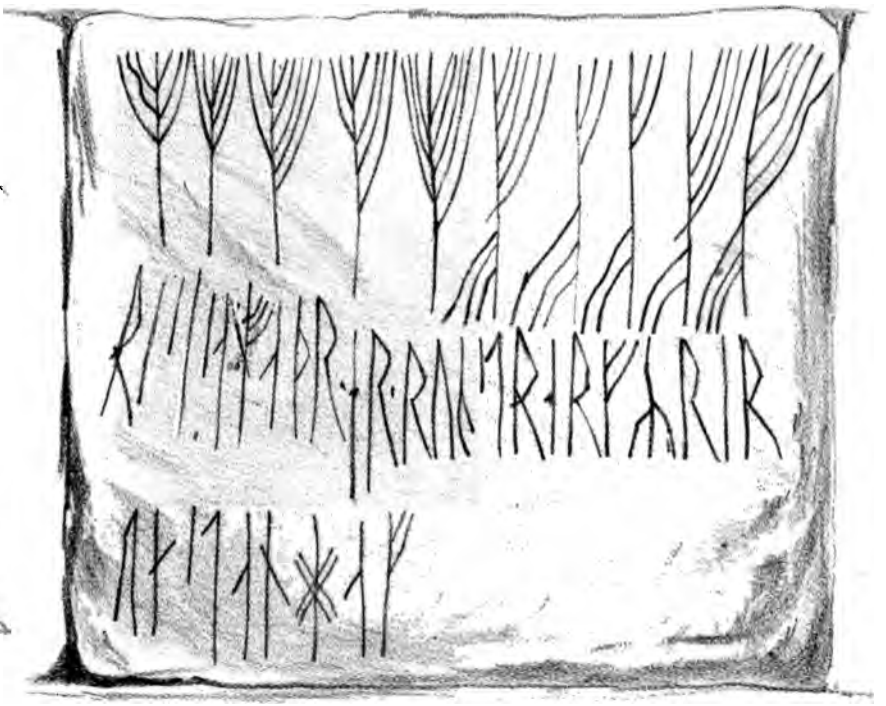

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PLATE V.

No. XV.

ARNFITHR MATR RÆISTRUNAR THÆISAR.

Arnfithr den sterke ridsede disse Runer.

Arnfithr the Strong cut these Runes.*

No. XVI.

(The ten Tree Runes give the words

LIS AYR BNAY.

The Shield of the art of Time,

And represent the year A.D. 1113).

RIST SAL FATHR ER RUNS TRER FYRIR WÆSTAN HAF.

Ridsede til vor salig Fader disse Rune

Træer (han var) Fører paa West-Havet.

Cut to our late Father these Rune Trees,

(He was a) leader on the West Sea.*

No. XVII.

HÆRMUNTR HAR THAKSIR A THINS RUN.

Harmund giver Taksigelse med disse Runer.

Harmunt gives thanks by these Runes.*

No. XVIII.

MÆTH THÆIRI OH SEER AT IGOAR UKR TRÆ NILSONR FYRER SUNANLANT.

Her træt og besværet med at gjøre Skibet i Stand Nielsen Fører til Sydlandene.

Here Tired and troubled, in repairing with difficulty the Ship, Nilson leader to Southern Lands.*

* See Notes.

PLATE VI.

No. XIX.

SIA HOUHR VAR FYRLATHIN HÆLAR
THÆIR VORO HVATER SLIT VORO
UT NORTHR ER FIFOL HIT MIKEL THALUR
SIMON SIHBRC,
SIHRITH. INROINSÖ.

See Skibet bar forladt,
og Skroget ligger der i Brændingerne
mod Nord er gjemt Skat og mange Daler.
Simon Sigberg
Sigred. I Roinsö.

Behold the Ship was abandoned, and
the Hull lies there among the breakers.
To the North is hidden treasure, and many Dollars.
Simon Sigberg
Sigred. In Roinsö.*

No. XX.

LOTHBROC ARSYNAR HÆNAR
MÆN SÆM-THÆIR VORO FYRASIR
IORSALA FARAR BRUTU ORKOU HLIF MIT SAILIAIARIS
LOFOIR HIR VAR FIFOL HKET MIKIL RÆIST
SÆLER SAIR FINA MATHA A THOGUSTH HIN MIKLA
OKONAKN BAR FIYRAR HITH IS W. I. N.

Lothbrog Arsynar omhyggelige
Mænd som bare udnævnte til vore Forere.
Jerusalems Farere som strandede paa Orkow Klipper i Taage
ved Forsömmelse. Her bar skjult Skatter, mange Kjeder, ridset
Sölv, fine Ornamenter, og meget Probiant.
Gjemme-Stedet ligger herfra mod W. til N.

Lothborg Arsynar (they are) careful
Men who were appointed our commanders.
Jerusalem leaders wrecked on the Orkney cliffs
In a mist slothfully.
Here was hidden treasure; many chains,
Cut silver, fine ornaments, and much fine stores.
The hidden place lies out from this W. by N.*

No. XXI.

T ARNFITHR RAIST RUNAR THISAR SONR STAINS.

T Arnfithr ridsede (disse) Runer (efter) hans Son Stein.

T Arnfithr cut (these) Runes (to his) son Stains.

THRUNK WIT.
Thrunk Wit.
Thrunk wit.*

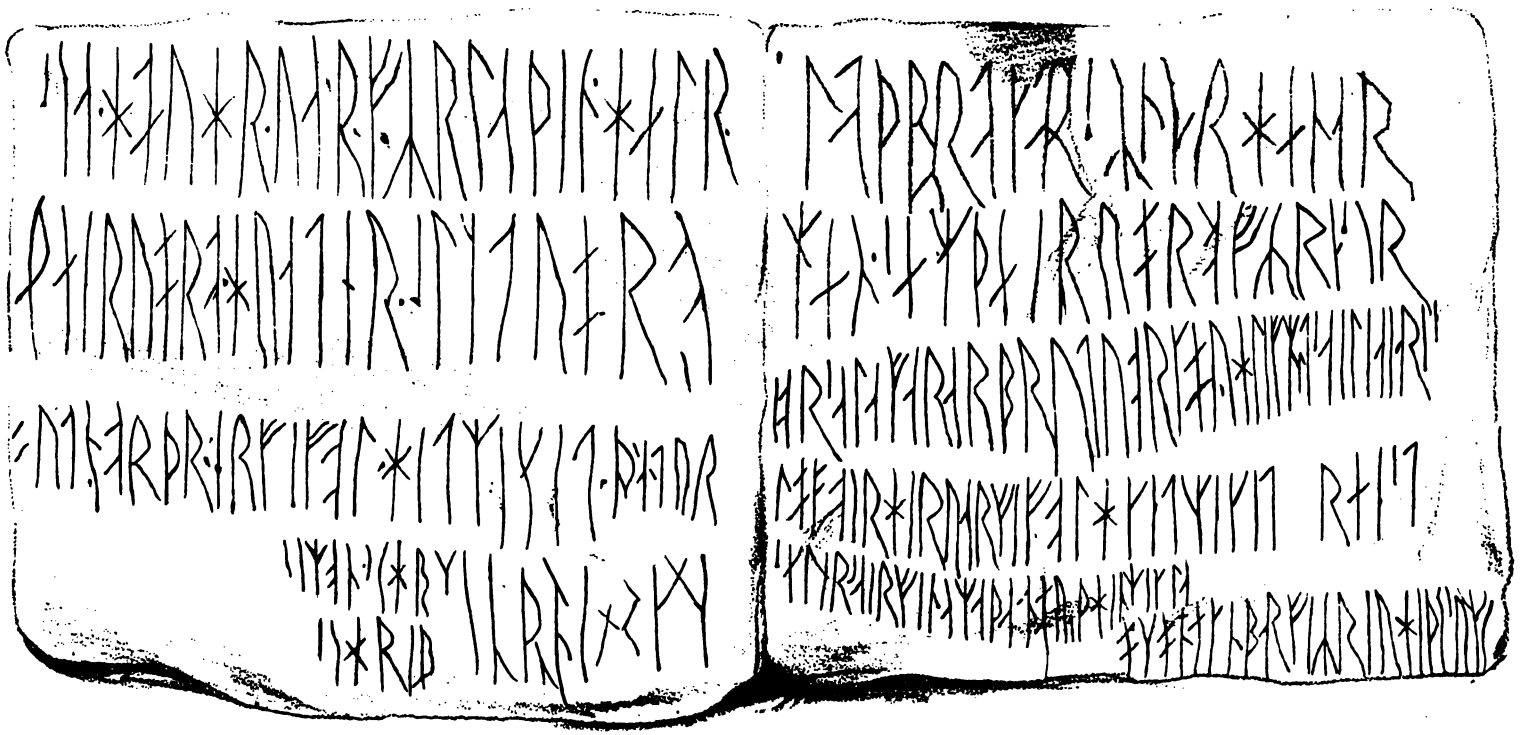
No. XXII.

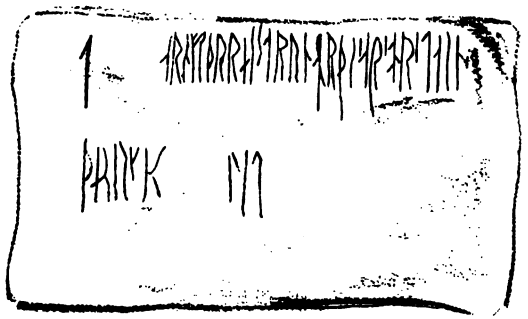
THALK RAEIST THANE RUNÆR AND INGES SE. L.

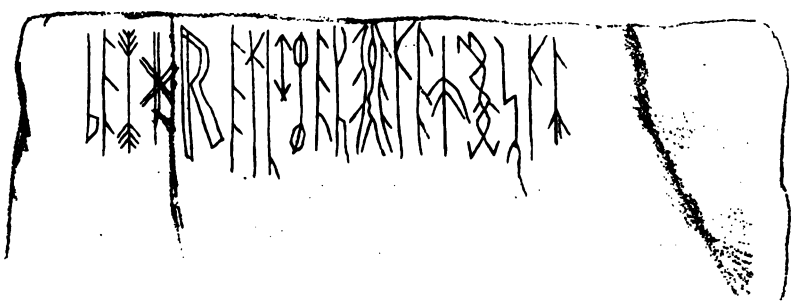
Thalk ridsede disse runer Aand Inges Sjel.

Dalk cut these Runes (for the repose of the) Spirit and Soul of Inge.*

* See Notes.







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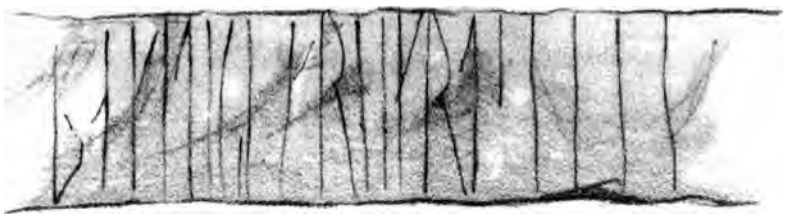

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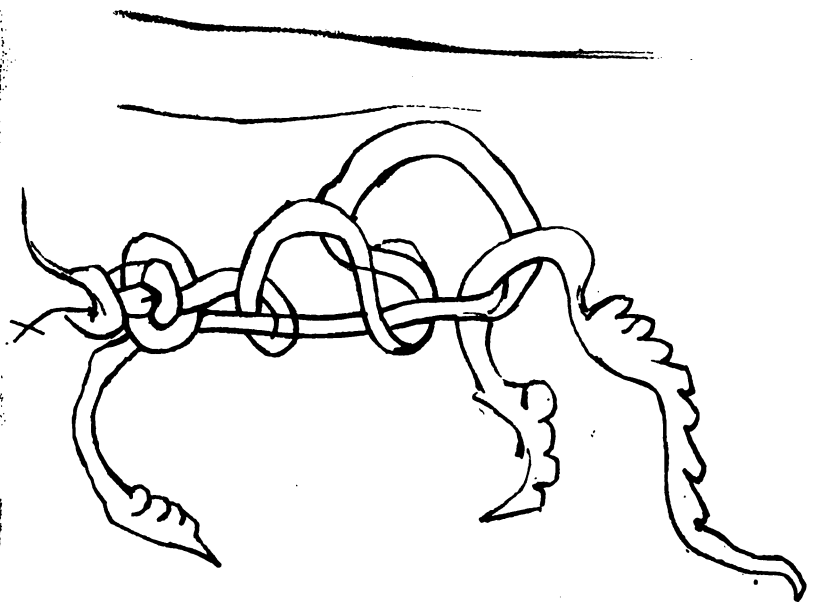

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PLATE VII.

No. XXIII.

IKIK ARTHIR KYNANA INVÆNSTA.

Arthur Kiger for den smukkeste af Fruentimmer.

Arthur looking out for the fairest of Women.*

No. XXIV.

BAKITI UKR EIGRT A IIII.

Mork taaget Veir. Skibet arbeider haardt. . . . .

Dark misty Weather. Ship labouring hard. . . . .*

No. XXV.

N IN

(The neatly cut Dragon probably was engraved as a private signal to the Northmen in some of the ships-of-war of the royal squadrons.)*

No. XXVI.

ISISIS.

(Doubtful.)

(The Serpent-knot probably also refers to the arrival or departure of some of the Royal Squadrons—the largest ships being named Serpents.)—(See *Description of Sea-Fight.*)*

* See Notes.

PLATE VIII.

No. XXVII.

(Might be made into) Lothbrog A.

No. XXVIII.

TH IR D.

No. XXIX.

D K IINK AKN.

The iink akn.*

The first Runic letter represents the D of the Waldemar alphabet, said to be invented by King Waldemar, who died in 1188.

No. XXX.

TH. M.*

No. XXXI.

AIS III.*

No. XXXII.

HAKN.

Hacon.

HACO.*

No. XXXIII.

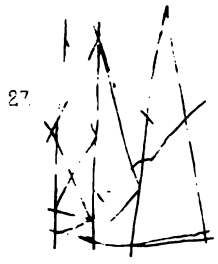
IKIK.

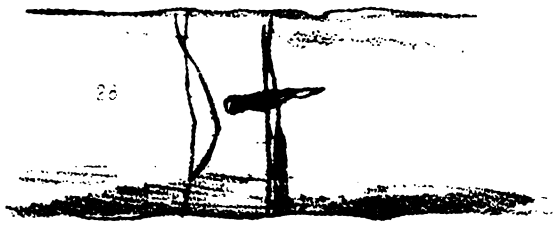
Seende ud.

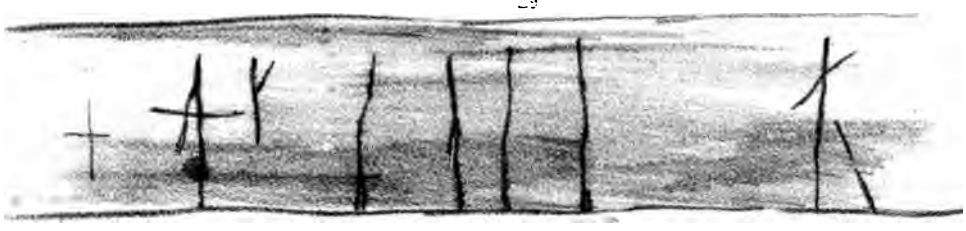
Looking out.

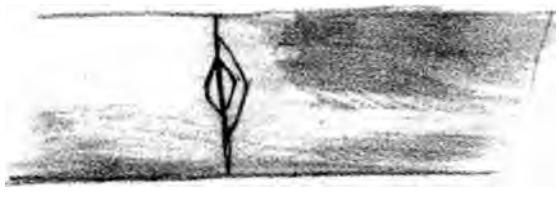
An inscription not described among those in Mr Farrer's book, but found in Mesehowe.*

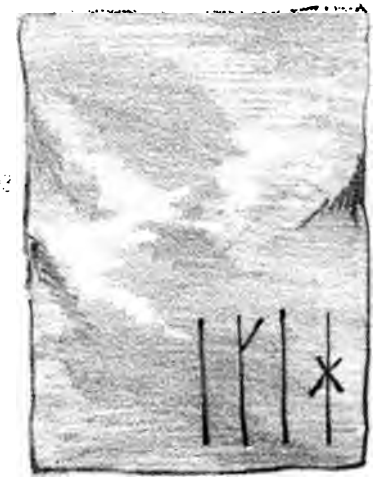
* See Notes.

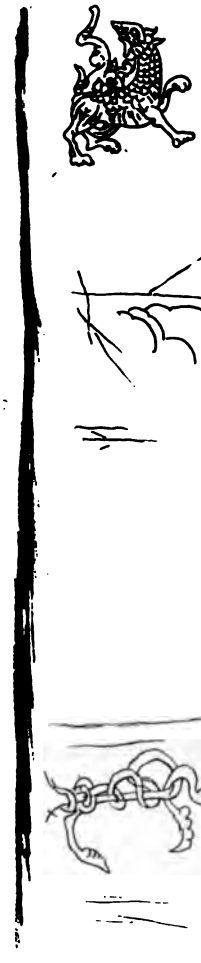


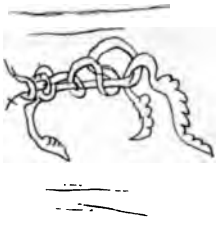












NOTES.

No. I.—Thatir Viking.

We may judge of the nature of the ships employed in the plundering expeditions of the Vikings, and the weapons and mode of fighting, from the descriptions, somewhat shortened, which we here give of the sea-fight that took place at Swolder, near Rugen, in the Baltic Sea, between the Norwegian king, Olaf Trygvesen, on the one side, and King Swend of Denmark, King Olaf of Sweden, and Erik Jarl, a Viking leader, on the other, at the end of the tenth century, translated from Snorre Sturleson's *Heimskringla Saga*.

Sea-fight between King Olaf Trygvesen and the Danish King Swend, the Swedish King Olaf, and Jarl Erik, on the 9th September 1000 A.D.

King Olaf of Norway ordered, by sound of trumpet, all his ships to assemble, seventy-one sail (but eleven of these were with Earl Sigwald, who deserted from his sovereign). The *Long Serpent* was one of the largest, and was said to have been 74 Norwegian ells, or 111 feet in length of keel. The king was in his own ship, the *Long Serpent*, in the middle of the fleet, and on one side of her was the *Short Serpent*, and on the other, the *Crane*, and the crews made the sterns of the *Long Serpent* and the *Short Serpent* fast together. When the king saw this, he called out, and commanded that they should lay the *Long Serpent* further forward, that the stern might not be too far back in the fleet. Then Wolf the Red, King Olaf's standard-bearer, said, "Is the *Long Serpent* to be placed so much further forward than the other ships? If so, there will be some hard work in the fleet to-day." The king answered, "I did not know that I had a sternsman so red and so ready;" an expression implying "so bold and so forward." Ulf answered, "Protect thou the stern, and I shall the bows." The king having a bow in his hand, laid an arrow on the

string, and pointed it at Wolf. Wolf cried, "Shoot it in another direction, king, where it can serve you better; my work is your success."

King Olaf stood on the poop, high above the others; he bore a shield inlaid with gold, and had on a helmet of beaten gold; over his chain-armour he wore a red jacket, and was easily known from the others. Erik Jarl had a large ship called *Iron Beard* (Jern Barder), which he was accustomed to employ in his Viking expeditions; and there was an iron railing on both sides of the stern, and farther on there was a thick iron plate, as broad as the railing, which went all the way along to the midships.

Then the kings laid aside their oars, and began the attack. King Swend brought his ship against the *Long Serpent*, and on the other side lay the Swedish king Olaf's ship, which was placed alongside of the most distant of King Olaf Trygvesen's ships, and on another side, Erik Jarl placed his. Here there was a sharp fight, which cost many lives; the stern-fighters in the *Long Serpent*, the *Short Serpent*, and *Crane*, threw their hooks and tackles into King Swend's ship, and made good use of their weapons against those opposed to them, and in this way cleared all the ships that they could get fast to; but King Swend and the crews that were beaten flew out of their own to other ships, and thus placed themselves safe beyond the reach of their opponents' weapons. King Olaf, the Swedish king, was in the same plight: he lost many of his people, and drew out of the battle; but Erik Jarl laid his ship, the *Iron Beard*, side by side with the farthest of King Olaf's ships, slew the crew, and cut the cable, and let it drive away; then he went to the next ship, and fought until the crew was subdued, and so with others, the crews of the Danish and Swedish ships filling up the blanks in his crew.

At last, all King Olaf Trygvesen's ships were defeated excepting the *Long Serpent*, to which ship all the armed men who were left had come from his other ships. Then the *Iron Beard* was laid alongside of the *Long Serpent*, and the battle was continued with swords. Erik Jarl was in the forepart of the ship, where there was put up a defence-shield or covering. In the fight there were used weapons for hewing and spears for sticking, and also every kind of arms that could be thrown; some shot with bows, and others threw darts. There were so many weapons thrown into the *Serpent*, there flew so many darts and arrows, that the shields could with difficulty keep them off, for on every side the *Serpent* was surrounded with the enemies' ships-of-war; and King Olaf's people became so furious that they rushed towards the enemies' ships to attack and kill the crews with their swords and spears. In this attempt, many of Olaf's men went overboard, and sunk in the sea with their weapons in their hands. The king had stood on the quarter-deck of the *Long Serpent* the greater part of the day, engaged sometimes in shooting with the bow, sometimes in throwing darts—always throwing two of these at a time. In looking forward over his ship he saw his men bravely striking with their swords, but at the same time with little effect. He then called out loudly, "Why do you strike so gently with your swords; they do not seem to cut?" One of them answered, that "they were blunt and full of notches." On this the king went down to the forehold, unlocked the chest under the high seat, and took out many well-sharpened

swords, which he gave to his men; but when he was reaching down his right hand, some of his people saw that the blood was running down from the steel gauntlet, but they did not know where the wound was.

The contest went on furiously in the *Serpent*, and the greatest loss of men was caused by the warriors at the bows and in the forecastle; because at both places chosen men had been placed, and there the ship's sides were highest; but at midships the people fell fast. As few men were left near the ship's mast, Erik Jarl resolved there to enter the ship with fourteen of his men. Hyrning, the king's brother-in-law, and some others, rushed to meet them, and fought so fiercely that the contest ended by the Jarl being driven back to the *Iron Beard*, after some of his men had been slain, and others of them wounded. The contest continued extremely hot, and many more men were slain in the *Serpent*. When Jarl saw that the crew of the *Serpent* were falling fast, and the defence much weakened, he resolved to board the *Serpent* a second time, but still he met with a bold reception. The men at the bows of the *Serpent*, seeing this attack, ran aft, and attacked Jarl, and there made a determined resistance. But as there had already fallen so many of the *Serpent's* crew, that some parts of the ship's sides were without defenders, Jarl's men stepped on board from different quarters; then all the men remaining of the crew to defend the *Serpent*, endeavoured to get aft to where the king stood, so as to form a guard around him. Kolbjorn Staller, or the king's marshal, who was clothed and armed like the king, and was an exceedingly big and handsome man, went up to the quarter-deck beside the king, and the battle was now fiercest at this place. But as so many of Jarl's men had come on board the *Serpent* as could find room, and as his ships surrounded the *Serpent* on every side, and as there were so few people left of the *Serpent's* crew to fight against such fearful odds, the greater part of the rest were soon slain, although they were both strong and brave. Olaf the king, and Kolbjorn Staller, both sprung overboard, each on his side of the ship, but Erik Jarl's men had placed small boats round the *Serpent* to kill or seize all those who jumped overboard. When the king sprang out they tried to lay hands on him, so as to carry him to Jarl; but King Olaf lifted his shield over his head, and sank under the water. Kolbjorn placed his shield beneath to protect himself from the darts that were thrown from the ships which lay under the *Serpent*, and so fell into the sea that his shield came under him, and he did not so quickly sink.

He was thus taken and carried into the ship by the enemy's men, who thought he was the king, and brought him to Erik Jarl; but when he found it was Kolbjorn and not King Olaf, he gave him his life.

At the same time all the rest of the crew of the *Serpent* who remained alive sprung overboard, and the king's brother, Thirkel Nefia, was the last man who left the ship.

The victory was so complete that Norway became subjected to the Danish and Swedish kings and Erik Jarl, who divided the country into three governments, each obtaining a part. Erik Jarl also obtained the *Long Serpent* with a large booty.

No. IV.

This inscription is evidently meant to inform some companions in another ship, or other ships, of the fact that the inscriber was bound homeward. The position of the letters of the Runic alphabet is always :

ᚠᚢᚦᚨᚱᚲᚷᚹᚺᚾᛁᛃᛇᛈᛉᛊᛏᛒᛖᛗᛚᛜᛟᛞ;

but in the inscription ᚢ, ur, U is given twice,
ᛟ, ör, Y, is misplaced,
and ᛚ, lager, L, } two of the principal letters, are omitted in the inscription,
and ᛘ, madr, M, }

and we may therefore suppose that the ship or person represented in these letters, FUTHORKH, was bound to the north-east ; namely, returning home.

No. V.

We do not remember to have seen this name of Wimund in any of the Scandinavian Sagas; but between the years 1141 and 1151, an individual of the name of Wimund is mentioned as being of a superior education, and that he was at first a monk in the Isle of Man, afterwards pretended to be the son of Angus, Earl of Moray, and married a daughter of Somerled, Thane of Argyle, and collecting bands of adventurers, made predatory excursions with ships into the neighbouring islands, and also on the Scottish coasts; and although King David sent an army against him, he eluded any attempts to capture him, and David had to make peace with him ; but his followers, ultimately tired of his oppressive conduct, gave him up to King David, and he was imprisoned at Roxburgh. As Wimund was a man of education, it is almost probable that this inscription is by his own hand, seeing that the Orkneys at that time were the headquarters for such predatory bands; and if so, the date of the inscriptions must, according to Fordun, be between 1140 and 1151.—See *Fordun*, viii. 2, and *Dalrymple's Annals*, 86.

No. VI.

"Om Thaimer" may also be translated "In the dark," from Thämadr, *obscurus*, darkness, Icelandic. Some of the letters, such as the last R in the inscription, have the appearance of want of light when the letters were inscribed.

No. VII.

The Ingeborg mentioned in the inscription was probably the Danish or Norwegian princess, the wife of Thorfin, whom Earl Ronald had driven out of the Orkneys, and who had taken refuge in Caithness. She may have come to Orkney, and taken refuge in the cave before Thorfin had acquired strength.

When Thorfin, the husband of Ingeborg, was earl, Ronald was created earl by Magnus, king of Norway, and came over to Orkney to claim from Thorfin his third share of the government, as the son of Bruscius. At first the two were reconciled, and engaged together in several expeditions; but having afterwards quarrelled, Ronald was defeated in a sea-fight, and retired to Caithness, but returned and succeeded in driving Earl Thorfin from the government of Orkney. However, soon afterwards, when Ronald came to Papey Westray, where he had gone to buy malt to prepare ale for his Yule feast, he was suddenly waylaid, attacked by Thorfin, and he and all his people slain.

Thorfin having afterwards gone to Rome on a pilgrimage, was received with much distinction by the Pope, and having returned to Orkney, lived a quiet life at Birsa, and there died at the age of 75, and was succeeded by Paul and Erland, sons of his Princess Ingeborg, in 1064.

This princess, it has been stated, was afterwards married to King Malcolm the Third of Scotland; but this appears erroneous. Ingeborg must have been, when her husband died, at the age of 75 in 1064, a very unlikely person, either as to age or rank, to be chosen the queen of such a young sovereign as Malcolm the Third then was. Now Malcolm the Third, called Caenmore, was only crowned at Scoon on the 25th April 1057,* was solemnly betrothed to the Princess Margaret of England, sister of King Edgar, in 1067,† and the nuptials took place with this Princess, at Dunfermline in 1070;‡ so that the statement, made by Dr Barry in his *History of Orkney*, must have arisen from some mistake.

It is worth noting, that a princess of the same name, Ingeborg, was interred at Thărug, near Hoby, having the following Latin inscription in Runic letters upon her monument:—

'Ingeborg filia Armunti jacet hic,'

which appears to be the only old sepulchral inscription in Runes, as far as we have had an opportunity of knowing, in the Latin language.

No. VIII.

This has the appearance, from its indistinctness, of being one of the oldest of the inscriptions, and records the circumstance of the building having been strengthened, and the surrounding fosse or ditch cut round the building by the person named.

* Fordun, b. v., c. 9. † Hoveden, p. 226. ‡ Fordun, b. v., c. 17.

No. IX.

Although this is a short inscription, it is a remarkable one, whether the Troldmand was an official in some of the Viking expeditions, accompanied some ships of the royal squadrons, or became an inmate of the howe for the purpose of exercising the black art, is doubtful. The small figure, as of a horse, appears hardly worth noticing; but when it is considered that this figure has eight feet or legs, one may readily suppose that it is meant to be an emblem of the magic art of Thorer, because one of the most prominent animals mentioned in the northern mythology, is Sleipne, Odin's wonderful horse, which was represented to be the quickest horse in the world, and to have eight feet or legs. The cross under the inscription has the appearance of having been cut long after the inscription, and probably for the purpose of undoing the influence of the wizard and his horse.

No. X.

There are two inscriptions on this stone. The first is also a strong proof that the voyagers at the time were pagans. It plainly tells us that the Vikings had a successful expedition, and that Thor had favoured them; and probably the second inscription is written by the same hand as may be supposed from the similarity of the R's in both.

No. XI.

This is the only inscription discovered in Mesehowe implying sepulture, and almost confirmatory of this is the circumstance that it is engraved on one of the upright pillars, the most suitable for a sepulchral monument, and perhaps the remains may be found immediately under the inscription: the first word, "Knut," is doubtful, as that part of the inscription is defaced.

No. XII.

The Totar Finla, in the inscription No. 12, is probably the Finla mentioned by Fordun, who states that the usurper of the Scottish throne, Macbeth, who was slain at Lumphanan, 5th December 1056, was the son of Fenele or Finlay, Lib. v., cap. 49; so that this was probably a relation of Macbeth, and had joined the Northmen in their predatory excursions.

No. XIII.

Is a very remarkable inscription, cut on one of the upright pillars in the cave, in its reading from right to left, and in its recording the unsuccessful attempt to discover a treasure

which had been concealed. It might be considered imprudent to divulge by such an inscription the concealment; but the search had been unsuccessful, and some of the companion-freebooters might be afterwards successful, and restore the treasure; and no doubt the number of those who wrote and could read the inscriptions would be small, and confined to the superior officers of each ship.

No. XIV.

Is on another upright pillar, and appears to be, or to have been, in the first place, two inscriptions; the one from left to right, much defaced: and the other one more recent, reading from right to left, with the letters different from the inscription 13, in so far that they have the position as if proceeding from left to right; while the letters in 13 face the left, these face the right, with the exception of the second letter. The oldest or first inscription appears to have been altered or written upon by the inscriber from the right side.

The other, or third inscription, written upside down on the same pillar, deserves particular attention. It not only exhibits a peculiar style of writing, but inculcates a moral precept, which none of the other inscriptions does.

No. XVI.

Is a pious record of the sons to their late father, who had probably died on an expedition. The tree Runes are very remarkable in their form, and record, doubtless, the year of the death of the father.—See *Vocabulary.*

No. XVII.

This inscription records the gratitude of one of the voyagers named Harmunt, who had been successful in his expedition, or escaped danger. It is remarkable in being the only one where the long double-angled S is used; and we may suppose that Harmunt was either a Swede or Dane, this S being more generally used in their Runic inscriptions.

No. XVIII.

Describes the trouble of one of the voyagers in getting his ship repaired, which was the more necessary as he seemed to have come from, or was bound on, a long voyage. The word Sunanlant, meaning either Africa or Sicily.

Nos. XIX. and XX.

Are the most ample inscriptions, and are placed together in the building. They are in juxtaposition, but they allude to different shipwrecks and different circumstances. The one ship or fleet was wrecked on the cliffs in a mist, in the Bay of Skaill probably, and

was likely the ship or ships from which the silver treasure had been saved and hid, which are now in the Museum. The other ship was lost and left among the breakers, "in broken water" "to the north" of Mesehowe, probably on "Rowsay," as one of the words may imply; the other, "west by north" of Mesehowe. The one had much treasure, consisting of money; the other had saved the treasure, and hid it, consisting of "chains, cut silver, fine ornaments, &c.," and the situation of the place where the treasure is hid is mentioned. The one says that the ship was lost, through carelessness, in a mist, by the commanders, Lothbrog and Arsyner; the other does not appear to have been lost from any fault of the commanders, whose names appear to have been Simon Sigberg and Sigred. As to the treasure, there can be no doubt that when the Vikings were returning from their predatory expeditions they were subject to considerable dangers—such as being wrecked, being attacked by their own or other sovereigns, by other pirates, or by a superior force of the natives. Under such circumstances, the pirates who might escape would doubtless endeavour to get the plunder put into a place of safety or security, hidden in such places as only could be known to themselves, whither they could return with other ships or fleets, when fortune was more favourable, to recover the hidden treasure.

SILVER ORNAMENTS AND COINS FOUND NEAR THE BAY OF SKAILL.

We have in the Mesehowe three separate inscriptions referring to the loss or concealment of treasure. One says, north-east by east from the howe it was thought that there was hidden treasure, "near the entrance-door;" another says, "to the north," or towards north, is "much treasure and dollars;" and a third says, "the hidden place lies out from this west by north." Martin, in his *Description of the Islands of Scotland*, says that fibulæ of silver have been found in Orkney, near this place; and Brand, in his *Description*, says that nine fibulæ of silver were found near this. But the largest and most valuable discovery of this kind was made on the 11th March 1858, a hook and a few fragments having been picked up by a boy the previous week at the mouth of a rabbit-hole, which led to the finding of the rest of the treasure. The treasure had been buried between the parish church and the Burn of Rin, and a short distance from the shore or the Bay of Skaill, in the parish of Sandwick, in the mainland of Orkney, which place may be said to agree with the second-quoted points of the compass as bearing from Mesehowe; and these having been carefully collected from the peasantry and others, who had obtained possession of them, the whole was delivered to our National Museum through the Honourable the Sheriff of Orkney, J. Edmondstone Aytoun, Esq. This valuable illustration of the habits of the people of a former age, consists of nine large silver ring brooches, mostly with bulbous ends, and tongues with bulbous heads, all of these ends and heads tastefully cut and ornamented; eight funicular torcs of silver, seven silver armillæ, twenty-five penannular rings or bracelets of various forms, several fragments and ingots of silver; and also, what was of great importance in fixing the age of the articles, here were found the following coins:

ANGLO-SAXON COINS.

Ethelstan 925, obverse, Edelstan Rex. T. Br: reverse, CNAD. MO. LEIGOF (Leicester).
St Peter's Penny, 10th century, obverse, SLIPE TRIMS reverse, CIV. EBORACE with cross in the centre.

CUFIC COINS.

SAMANIAN Ismael Ben Achmed, .	A.D. 887
Do. do. . .	A.D. 897
Nasr Ben Achmed, . .	A.D. 913
Do., struck at Samarcand,	
No date (between)	A.D. 913 & 943
ABBACIDE Al Radhi Billah, . .	A.D. 936
Al Mostakfi Billah, struck at Bagdad, . . .	A.D. 945

And some other coins and fragments of coins, these named being the most remarkable, and the newest being of 945, proves that it could not have been deposited earlier than that year, although, of course, it is possible that part may have been deposited at an earlier period. This collection deserves, and we may probably give, a more elaborate description at some future time; but in the meantime we refer to the engraving of all the articles found, in the Museum, carefully copied from a photograph.

In the ancient account of the expedition of King Haco to the Scottish coast in 1263, from which we gave an extract in a previous part of this work, we find the tribute or contribution which he exacted from the inhabitants of Caithness partly consisted of "Bauggerdar," which implies any ornament of a round form, such as brooches, armillæ, or bracelets: the words are, "Enn Katnesingar gengo undar gjalldit, ok gerde Hakon Konongr menn til at taka saman feit, sem her er quedit."

"Fyrst tok fiorleystom
Frodr af Næsthionom
Giolld hinu grith-milldi
Gærir nord sætra
Oll var ogn = fallin
Olld af stor = volldom
Hrædd vid her klæddan
Herdi BAUG = GERDAR"

"And the Caithness men agreed to pay the exaction, and King Haco sent men to collect it, according to the poem."

"The wise and peaceful leader and [illegible] of the northern powers took tribute from the

dwellers in Caithness as payment for their safety; the inhabitants of the surrounding lands were afraid of the armour-clad heroes, the seizers of rings."

A similar discovery of hidden treasure was made at Vaalse, Falster, Denmark, in the spring of 1835, by a ploughman, whose plough struck a metal box, under the surface, about twenty yards from the sea-shore. It consisted of several bars or ingots of silver, broken rings, armillæ, torcs, miscellaneous fragments, and 493 coins, a great many of which were Eastern or Cufic, many European, several of which are English of Edmund and Edgar, the latest being of Ethelred, 979 and 1017; and the latest of the Cufic coins is dated 361 after the Hegira or 971–2 of the Christian era, so that the probability is that the treasure had been concealed about the end of the 10th century.

It is remarkable that in this large collection of ornaments and coins, there are no brooches similar to the brooches found in Orkney, and among the great number of coins, no Danish, Swedish, or Norwegian coins.

This treasure had been also in all probability concealed by some of the Vikings, who may have been shipwrecked on the coast, or driven on shore by an enemy.

The frontispiece of the present work, as already stated, represents the treasure found "west by north" of Mesehowe; the whole of the treasure was photographed by Cumming, and afterwards carefully lithographed by Messrs Johnston, so that each article is represented in its relative size according to the scale, and the treasure may be now seen in the Collection of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.

No. XXII.

Is the most beautiful, and, at the same time, the most difficult of all the inscriptions.

No. XXIII.

Has a curious figure resembling the upper part of a seal or otter holding a fish in its mouth: the inscription denotes a love engagement.

No. XXIV.

Refers to the dangerous situation of one of the ships, and is left unfinished.

No. XXV.

Verelius, in his *Runographia*, gives the representation of two dragons on two stone monuments in Sweden, with the words on one of the monuments:

ᛁᚢᛁ ᛁᛘᛁ ᚱᛁᛦᛁᚴ, viz., Two Good Dragons.

probably implying that the individuals commemorated had been commanders of two of the

large ships-of-war named *Dragons*. These two in Verelius have a close resemblance to this one in Mesehowe.—Vide *Runographia*, cap. viii., page 60.

No. XXVI.

The Serpent-knot, as well as the Dragon, probably implied the arrival, and the departure in the direction to which they pointed, of some of the large ships-of-war of some of the northern sovereigns; and we therefore the more willingly gave a short account of the expeditions of the northern sovereigns: and (in illustration of the mode of warfare and the form of the ships) the account of the remarkable sea-battle between King Olaf Trygvesen and the Danish and Swedish sovereigns, joined with Erik Jarl.

No. XXXIII.

Is the inscription not described in Mr Farrer's publication, and has the word "Ikik," "Looking out," or "On the watch," the same which begins the inscription of No. 24. This is evidently an unfinished inscription.

VOCABULARY OF DOUBTFUL AND DIFFICULT WORDS.

No. I.

UTIR at vitia, *invisere, visitare*, to see or visit, Norrœnic.

No. III.

BRAH, at bräka, *frangere*, brake or wrecked, Nor.
THANA, Thannug, Thangar, *illuc*, there, or near this, Nor.

No IV.

N, Nord, north;
I, preposition *to;*
AST, Austr, *orientum versus*, towards east; } namely, together "*to the north-east*," Nor.
BYNU, at buna, *scatere*, bound, or hastening, Nor.

No. VI.

SAH, at saga, *secare*, cut or sawed, Nor.
THAIMER may mean also THAMADR, *obscurus*, in the dark, Nor.

No. VII.

AHGIA, Ahyggia, *solicitudo, cura*, in distress, or in fear, Nor.
KOCKA, *coquere*, boiling, Nor.
OFLATE, hoimodig, hopeful, Nor.

The Tree Runes, while representing letters of the Alphabet, are here used to give also the date or year. For instance, the first, with the transverse line, represents 1000; and the others (their value added together) make up the year 1063.—See Olaus Wormius' *Fastes Danici*, &c.

The Tree Runes in Plate III., therefore, *in the order in which they stand*, give these letters and numbers:

1000	16	5	9	17	16
A	R	R	I	AI	R

No. VIII.

NIASR, hnias, *explorare*, niosnari, *explorator*, an explorer, Nor.
SKURIR, at skora, *incidere*, cut in or round, Nor.
FALHN, fallinn, *dispositus*, properly, Nor.
KIABI, gopi, *cavitas*, cave, Nor.
KSVIL, skyla, *umbra*, dark or hidden, Nor.
SOMAIR, at soma, *se bene genere*, to do well, or put in order, Nor.

No. IX.

VOMIR, Vomr v. Vomadr Troldmand, *Magus*, wizard, Nor.

No. X.

NYSÆRTH, at hnyssa, *favere*, to favour or smile, Nor.

No. XI.

KNUT, doubtful.
URTHR, Verdugr, Vœrder, *dignus*, worthy, Nor.

No. XIII.

THAT, Thogd, *gratia*, favour, Nor.
MAN, at mana, *mannire*, record or report, Nor.
AHE, at aga, *exerceo*, to try or endeavour, Nor.
FEANU, at finna, *invenire*, to find, Nor.
ARINT, arin, *focus domesticus*, house or place, Nor.
ÆNTHÆIR, Anddyr, *vestibulum*, entrance-door, Nor.

XIV.

GUNHUL, war-cave, Nor.
AHE, Act.
IMINIASS, himneskr, *cœlestis*, heavenly, Nor.
FÆG, fagnadr, *lætitia*, joy.
AMISRIS, missir, *amissio*, evil or grief, Nor.

No. XV.

MATR, mattr, *vis, potentia*, strong, Nor.

No. XVI.

SAL, saladr, *vita defunctus*, late or dead, Nor.

The Trees represent certain letters and figures, as before stated, the following make up the year to A.D. 1113 :

l	i	s	a	y	y	b	n	a	y
1004	9	11	10	16	16	13	8	10	16 = 1113

No. XVII.

THAKSIR, tak-siger, thanks, Danish or Norsk.

No. XVIII.

MÆTH, at mæda, *defetiscere*, tired, Nor.

SEER, at syrgia, *lugere*, troubled, Nor.

IGOAR, Utgiore, *concludere*, finish or repair, Nor.

SUNANLANT, southlands, Africa, Sicily, &c.—Egilson's *Poetical Dictionary.*

No. XIX.

SLIT, *ruptura*, broken. Nor.

FI, fe, *pecunia*, money or treasure, Nor.

FOL, folga, hidden, Nor.

HOUHR, hufr, *navis*, Nor.

HOUK, a ship, Jamieson's *Scottish Dictionary.*

"The meikle houk hym bare was Triton callit."—*Douglas's Virgil*, 321, 55.

COGUES: Roger of Wendover says, "Sweyn, king of the Danes, and Anluf of Norway, arrived at London with 94 COGUES, and made a fearful assault on it."

KUGG: "Sogdo at KUGG einn rak framan at festom ;" said that a ship was driving against the cable.—King Haco's Voyage, *Flateyan and Frisian MSS.*

No. XX.

SAILIARIS, siolœgia, *nebula pelagica*, mist at sea, Nor.

LOFOIR, löfja, sloth, Sw.

HKET, ket, chain, Sw.

SÆLER, silfr, silver, Nor.

SAIR, sira, ornaments, Nor.

OKONAKN, okunnugr, unknown or hidden place, Nor.

No. XXIII.

IKIK, to keek, on the outlook, to look out, Scottish.

VÆNSTA, VÆN, *formosus*, fair, Nor.

No. XXIV.

[illegible] Fakki, *nubilum pelagicum*, mist on the sea, Nor.
[illegible] move heavily, Nor.
[illegible] Jamieson's *Scottish Dictionary*.

XXVIII.

[illegible] A Waldemar Rune of 12th century, our letter D.

No. XXXIII.

[illegible] looking out, Nor.
This is a new inscription, and not given in Mr Farrer's Translations.

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